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Homepage

It's wiser to wait for Windows 10

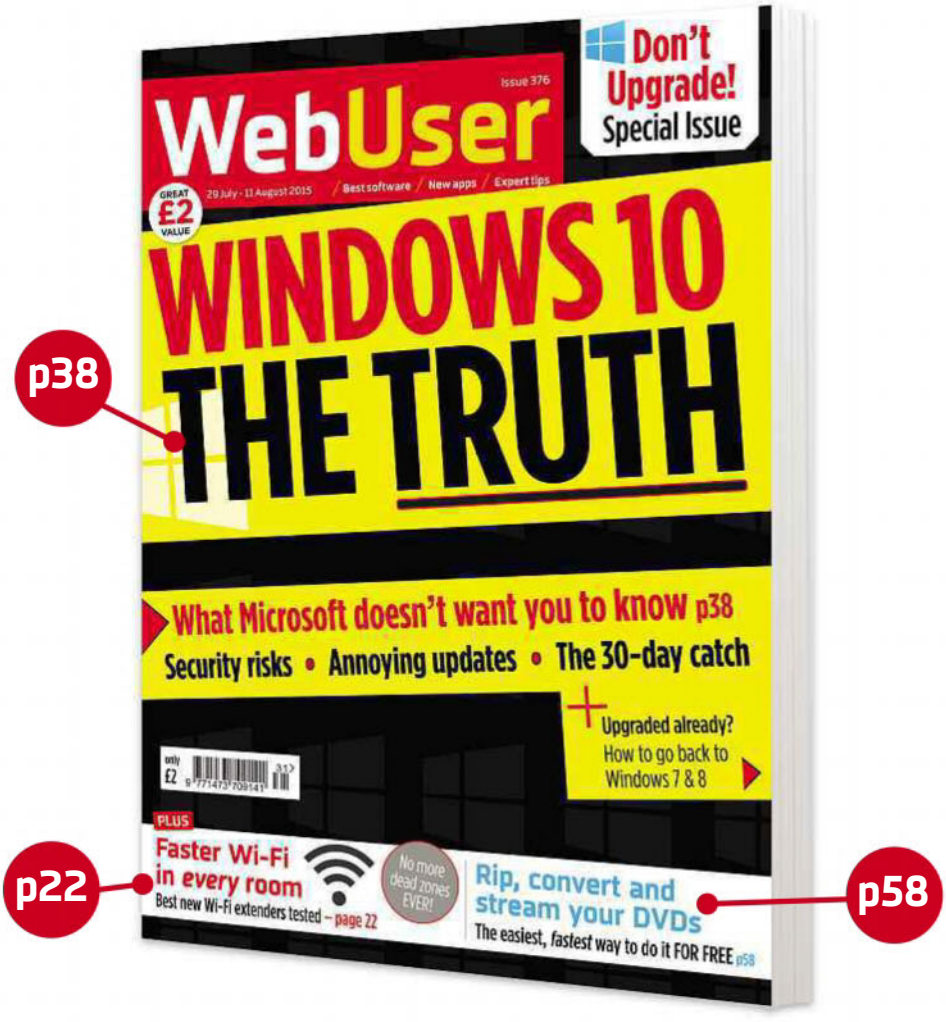
Hip hip hooray! It's time to put up the bunting, blow up the balloons and stick 10 candles in the cake, as we welcome Microsoft's exciting new operating system. So why do I fear that Windows 10 will come stumbling through the door in a drunken stupor and vomit on the cat before collapsing under a table? Wait until the next morning and, after a few aspirin and a good hard think, it'll be right as rain, much like the real Windows 10 once it's been tweaked, patched and ironed into shape.

In this issue's cover feature (page 38), we cut through the hype to explain why there's no big rush to upgrade to Windows 10, and why you might regret it if you do. We reveal the information that Microsoft is keeping quiet, and show you how to 'downgrade' to your previous system if you have problems with the new one. Don't get us wrong, we're delighted to have a new toy to play with, but sometimes it pays to procrastinate.

Robert Irvine
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#webuser



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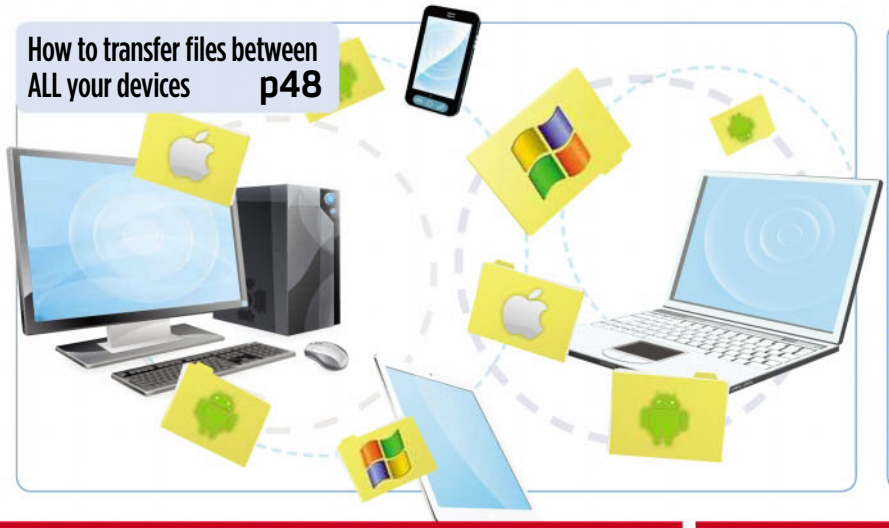
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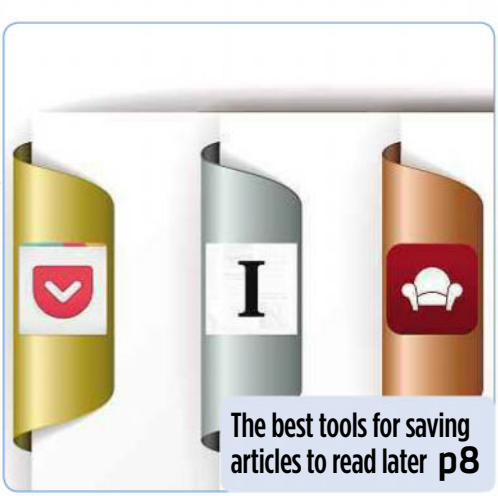
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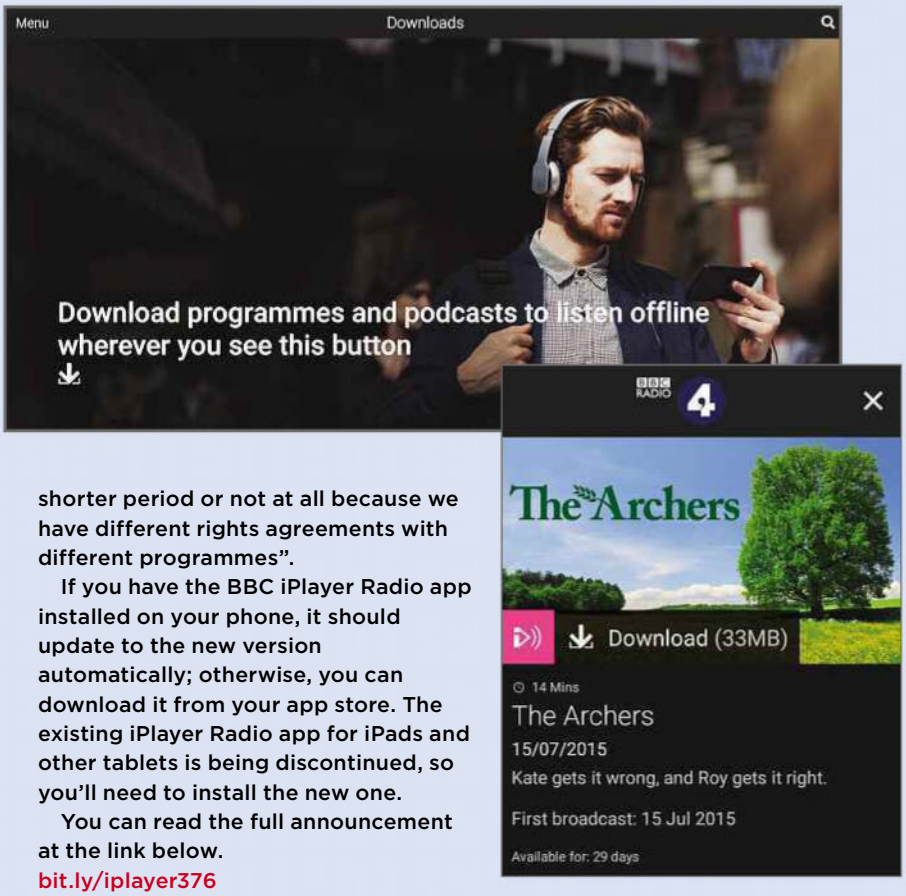
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What's New Online

Download BBC radio shows to listen to offline



We've been able to download TV programmes from BBC iPlayer to play offline for a while now, but not our favourite radio shows. Happily, the Beeb has now seen sense and added this much-requested feature to its updated iPlayer Radio apps for Android, iOS and Kindle Fire (sorry, Windows Phone users).

This means you can download full BBC radio programmes and listen to them at your leisure, even if you're out of range of a Wi-Fi or 3G/4G signal. So you can enjoy *Desert Island Discs* while sunning yourself on the beach and take *The Archers* on the plane with you.

As with TV downloads, BBC radio shows are available to download for 30 days after broadcast, and you then have a further 30 days to listen to them before they disappear from your mobile device.

However, there are exceptions. In its blog post to announce the new feature, the BBC warns that "some programmes are available for a shorter period or not at all because we have different rights agreements with different programmes".

If you have the BBC iPlayer Radio app installed on your phone, it should update to the new version automatically; otherwise, you can download it from your app store. The existing iPlayer Radio app for iPads and other tablets is being discontinued, so you'll need to install the new one.

You can read the full announcement at the link below.
bit.ly/iplayer376

Discover Earth's music floating through space

lightyear.fm

Based on the fact that radio waves travel at the speed of light and inspired by the stunning opening sequence of the film *Contact*, Lightyear.fm lets you scroll out from the Earth into space to discover how far popular songs could have travelled since the day of their release. Today's chart hits have only just reached orbit, but the farther you venture into the Milky Way, the older the music becomes. It's an amazing journey for both your ears and your eyes, and is best appreciated with headphones and using Chrome. Pity those poor aliens 50 light years away who have just been hit by Petula Clark trilling 'Downtown'.



Send Google Maps directions to your phone

www.google.co.uk/maps



In April, Google introduced a clever feature that lets you send directions from search results to your phone. Now you can do the same in Google Maps. Once your directions are on screen, click the 'Send to device' link, check that your device (Android or iOS) is supported, then select it. A notification will then appear on your phone showing your destination address. From there you can open Google Maps, or just bring up the directions.

You need to be signed into your Google account, and your phone needs to be linked to it. You'll also need the latest version of Google Maps (Android bit.ly/maps376; iOS bit.ly/mapsios376). If you're having trouble, read Google Maps' Help page: bit.ly/help376.

Turn to page 46 for tips on sending files between devices without using email.

We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

See everything that's orbiting Earth

stuffin.space
Updated daily using data from the US Department of Defense, 'Stuff in Space' shows you all the man-made objects orbiting our planet. And it's a *lot* of stuff: around 150,000 satellites, rocket parts and bits of junk, represented respectively on screen by red, blue and grey dots. Click one to see more information about it.



Watch the Mars Rover's journey

bit.ly/rover376
In April this year it took London Marathon winner Eliud Kipchoge two hours, four minutes and 42 seconds to run the 26.2 miles of the course. Nasa's Opportunity Rover is a bit of a slowcoach by comparision: it took 11 years to cover the same distance on Mars, from 2004 to 2015. Fortunately, Nasa has released a time-lapse video of the journey, which lasts only eight minutes. together with a map tracing the route Opportunity took.



Create your own historical font



typo.polona.pl
Do you like our new logo? It was generated by the website Typo, which picks letters at random from six centuries' worth of documents in the National Library of Poland's digital collection. Click the top-right Settings link to narrow the range of documents it searches by year and by type. You could, for example, restrict the search solely to letters used in magazines and newspapers between 1922 and 1940. If you don't like what you see, click the 'Reload' icon at the bottom. If you do, there are options to share and print it.

See your local area in film

bit.ly/film376
The British Film Institute has made a 'film map' that lets you search for archive videos that were recorded near a certain location. Just enter a postcode or city to see what's available. The collection of 2,500 videos – which will eventually grow to 10,000 – includes adverts, newsreels, films and TV shows, with the earliest dating from 1895.



5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@maggiemay_hem
Andy Murray's dog has been tweeting since September 2010, and is a lot chattier and cheerier than her owner

@ClassicFM
Classical music facts, fun and details of what's currently playing

@GoProUK
View the latest photos and videos captured by the action camera – the subject of next issue's FAQ

@Konnie_Huq
The TV presenter has joined Twitter in time for her new Sky 1 series, *King of the Nerds*

@Wit_of_Wilde
Daily witticisms and aphorisms from the ever-quotable Oscar Wilde

Download Angry Birds 2

www.angrybirds2game.com
The ever-popular bird-slinging game returns on 30 July. Details were sparse at the time of going to press, but those smug pigs had better watch out!

Add your birthday to Twitter

bit.ly/bday376
If you didn't get many cards on your birthday, try adding your details to your Twitter profile. Balloons will appear on your account on the big day, along with the less welcome gift of targeted adverts.

Discover popular Spotify tracks worldwide

bit.ly/spotmap376
Spotify's 'Cities of the World' map analyses 20 billion "listener/track relationships" to showcase the most popular music in a thousand different cities across the world.

Best new summer gadgets

Whether you're heading off on holiday or relaxing in the garden, these seven handy gadgets will ensure your summer goes with a swing

Aukey Luna Qi

£49.99

www.techccessorize.com

Wireless chargers save you fiddling around with cables, and they don't come much smarter than the Aukey Luna Qi. Three overlapping coils give the 17cm stand a larger charging area than similar devices, while the round design lets you place your phone flat or standing up. There's also a companion Luna app (Android and iOS), which allows you to view videos, photos and an analogue clock on your device while it is charging, rather than just a blank screen. The Aukey Luna is available in silver or gold, and works with any Qi-enabled device, including phones from Samsung, HTC and Motorola.



August EP610 Bluetooth Headphones

£13.75

www.idaffodil.co.uk

Avoid unwieldy tangles and unsightly tan lines when you're listening to music in the sun using these stylish black-and-red Bluetooth headphones. As well as giving you the freedom to enjoy your tunes wirelessly, they have a microphone and on-ear controls that allow you to answer and hang up calls without touching your phone. The headphones come with three different sizes of earbud and four sizes of stabilisers, so are sure to fit any ear comfortably, and their built-in rechargeable battery lasts for more than five hours.



SafeSleeve

£39.99

www.techccessorize.com

Although there's no hard evidence that mobile phone use causes cancer, they do emit electromagnetic radiation, which could be potentially harmful when you consider how much we use our phones every day. The SafeSleeve case offers protection against this radiation, as well as everyday bumps, scratches and drops. Other useful features include an RFID-blocking wallet that prevents thieves from using radio frequencies to scan your bank card details; and a built-in stand to prop up your phone when you're watching videos. The SafeSleeve is available for the iPhone 5 and 5S in black, beige and grey.



Modecom FreePC

£129.99

www.amazon.co.uk

You no longer need baggy trousers and a strong back to carry a computer in your pocket, because the Modecom FreePC is a fully functioning PC packed into a device no bigger than a USB hard drive. This miniature marvel packs in 2GB of RAM, 16GB of storage (expandable by 32GB with a microSDHC card) and a quad-core Intel processor. Simply plug it into the HDMI port of a monitor or TV for instant access to Windows 8.1, which you can control using a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard. The FreePC also comes with a free one-month trial to Office 365, a USB cable to power it and an instruction manual. It's ideal for use at home, at work or on holiday.



Netis E1 300Mbps Wireless N Range Extender

£20.99

www.morecomputers.com

This compact Wi-Fi range extender expands your wireless internet connection so you can browse the web while soaking up the sun in the garden. Set-up couldn't be easier: plug the device into a power socket between your router and a Wi-Fi dead zone in your home, then press the WPS button, first on your router and then on the extender, and you're done. The Netis E1 will instantly boost the strength of your signal and significantly increase your Wi-Fi coverage, so you can download videos, stream music and make internet calls, no matter where you are inside or outside the house.



Go LED Bag

£129.99

www.ebuyer.com

With cycling accidents on the rise, it's more important than ever to be seen on the road and the Go LED Bag provides an inventive solution. It's a smart backpack with an integrated LED panel in the front pocket that lets you display three highly visible direction signs – left, right and forward – and a warning sign in the form of a red exclamation mark. The panel is operated using a remote control that you can fix to your handlebars or store in the bag's shoulder strap. The Go LED Bag takes four hours to fully charge using a USB cable, and provides 40 hours of use between charges. The bag weighs just 1kg has a 35-litre capacity, with padded laptop and tablet compartments, plenty of useful pockets and a rain cover.



August SE30WB Portable Bluetooth Speaker

£17.45

www.idaffodil.co.uk

The days when you needed to be in the same room as your hi-fi to listen to music are long gone, and this powerful portable speaker doesn't sacrifice sound quality for convenience. It features two 3W drivers and a 'passive radiator' (which increases low-frequency response) to deliver crisp sound with a punchy bass. 'Pair and Play' Bluetooth lets you wirelessly connect your phone or tablet in seconds, and there's also a 3.5mm audio socket to plug in your laptop or standalone MP3 player. Battery life is an impressive eight hours, and there are easy-to-access buttons to pause, skip and rewind tracks, and to adjust the volume. Just remember to respect your neighbours if you're listening in the garden or park, or on the beach.



Need to Know

Firefox blocks Flash after hackers exploit countless flaws



What happened?

Mozilla has blocked the Flash plug-in by default on its Firefox browser, after a host of bugs were found that were being used by criminals to attack users.

Mozilla said the block may only be temporary, suggesting it may reverse its decision if Flash's developer Adobe fixes the security flaws. Other tech companies including Apple have long blocked the plug-in, which is used to show videos, adverts and other multimedia content online.

The move follows leaks from Italian IT security company Hacking Team, which was – rather ironically – hacked in early July. Documents released by the hackers show the group had on file several Adobe flaws, which could be used to target users when a browser uses the plug-in.

Adobe has rushed to fix some of the flaws, but Flash is always a major target for hackers, which is why Apple won't let it run on iPhones and iPads. Google's Chrome is set to start blocking Flash adverts from playing by default, but Google says this isn't for security-related reasons, but rather to make sure it doesn't weaken battery life on phones and tablets.

How will it affect you?

The change doesn't mean you can't use the Flash plug-in; it simply means Flash multimedia content will no longer play by default. If you load a web page in Firefox that has Flash content, the browser will show a pop-up bar with the message: "Firefox has prevented the unsafe plug-in 'Adobe Flash' from running" (see screengrab below). In the banner, there is a button to "allow" it to play, though before clicking you'll want to think twice to make sure you trust the source. You'll be able to let Flash run just that time, or turn it back on permanently.



The tide does seem to be turning against Flash, though. Chrome's advert ban could be the final nail in the coffin for the beleaguered plug-in because it may force advertisers to switch to HTML5, a different – and potentially safer – way of displaying multimedia content. Netflix and YouTube already use HTML5, for example.

As a web user, you probably won't notice the difference between Flash and HTML5. Your videos will play the same and adverts will still litter web pages. The difference is that websites using HTML5 should load faster and contain fewer security holes that leave you at risk of being hacked or otherwise targeted by criminals. You can turn off Flash yourself in Chrome by typing `chrome:plugins` into the address bar, and then clicking the Enable/Disable link under Adobe Flash.

What do we think?

Mozilla's decision was overdue. Five years ago, Apple's then-CEO Steve Jobs wrote an open letter with his "thoughts on Flash", explaining the many reasons why his company was dropping the software. Its poor security was just one point of several.

At the time, many criticised Jobs for trying to control the web, but he appears to have been correct in picking HTML5 over Flash. Five years on, others have followed suit. Mozilla and Google have taken steps away from Flash, and major online video sites already favour HTML5.

The whole debate highlights how slowly the web evolves. It's been well known for years that Flash has severe flaws, but it's taken too long for web companies to move to a better, safer alternative. In the meantime, users have been left using software at regular risk of being hacked. It's time for all websites and browsers to drop Flash, especially since moving to HTML5 is so smooth most users wouldn't even notice it happening.

What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

£50 'unlock' scam targets iPhone users

What happened?

British iPhone users are reporting that they are being targeted by a scam that is already well known in the US. A message from "iPhone Support" pops up (see screengrab), saying that a third-party app has caused your phone to crash and is trying to steal your data. It tells you to ring a support number to get "an immediate fix".

However, calling that number isn't a good idea: the people on the other end of the line are scammers and will try to charge you £50 – and also steal your credit card details.

How will it affect you?

If the message does pop up on your phone, don't panic and definitely *don't* call the number. There's an easy fix that anyone can perform. Simply go to settings and put the phone in Airplane Mode. This turns off all connectivity. Then go to settings for the Safari browser, clear the website history and saved browsing data, then re-open the browser. If that doesn't work, visit an Apple Store (see locations at bit.ly/stores376) and ask an expert to help you.

Such scams tend to hang around for years. If you have less tech-savvy friends or family, warn them about the scam.

What do we think?

Such scams aren't common, which is a surprise given the phenomenal popularity of the iPhone. But as is so often the case with text and email scams, a little common sense goes a long way if you want to avoid becoming a victim. The message that's catching people out has typing errors and spelling mistakes. For example, it spells 'iOS' with a capital 'i', a mistake Apple wouldn't make.

Even if criminals learn to use spellcheck, always remember that companies such as Apple or Microsoft – another company scammers often pretend to be calling from – simply won't ask for your credit-card details over the phone.



Email spam hits 12-year low

What happened?



Time to break out the champagne: spam has slid to its lowest level in more than a decade. That's according to security firm Symantec, which said that 49.7 per cent of the emails it scanned in June were spam messages – the lowest proportion in 12 years. In the month since, that rate has continued to fall, dropping to 46.4 per cent.

Symantec said this was mostly down to successful legal action taken by law-enforcement agencies worldwide against criminal networks. However, there's a downside. Online gangs are shifting away from spam but looking to malware to make money instead, so the number of hacking attacks has risen.

How will it affect you?

At one point in the history of email, more than 90 per cent of messages were believed to be spam – though most of us wouldn't see the difference between then and now. That's because most modern email providers, such as Outlook.com and Gmail, do a good job of filtering spam before it hits our inboxes, either blocking it entirely or diverting it straight to our junk folders where it sits unread until it's deleted.

What do we think?

We congratulate email providers and security firms for holding back the tide of spam. A few years ago, this kind of good news seemed a long way off. Without such efforts, email would have quickly become useless rather than remaining a tool many of us depend on in our work and personal life.

Web users also deserve praise, because very few now fall for the kind of transparent frauds that comprise most spam. Criminals know this, and now increasingly use malware, not spam, in their attempts to steal the personal information they need to gain access to your bank account.

However, email and security companies should realise that the demise of spam doesn't mean we're winning the war on cybercrime, and must reinforce their efforts to keep us safe.

Windows 10 to be sold on USB stick

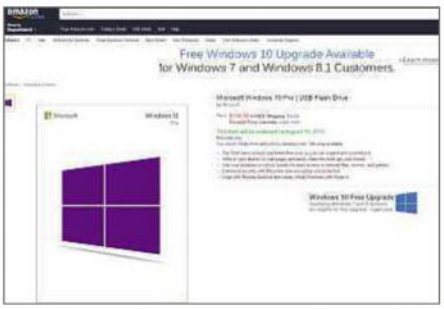
What happened?

Microsoft announced that Windows 10 would be the first version of the operating system you can buy on USB stick as an alternative to downloading it or buying it on DVD.

However, if you are already running a legitimate copy of Windows 7 or 8.1, you won't need to "buy" anything, as you will be able to download Windows 10 free of charge for 12 months from its launch on 29 July – provided your hardware is compatible.

Microsoft is rolling out Windows 10 in waves. Windows Insiders will be the first users allowed to download the OS, followed by Windows 7 and 8.1 users who reserved their copy by clicking the Windows icon that appeared in their Taskbar after a recent update.

Windows 10 has been officially released to manufacturers at the time of writing, which means it has been





finalised ahead of its launch on 29 July. However, it seems the USB version of Windows 10 won't be available to buy straight away. The Amazon US product page for the USB drive says it will only be released on 16 August (see screengrab). There's no news on when it will be available in the UK, but we'd be surprised if it doesn't arrive before the end of the summer.

How will it affect you?

Having the option to install Windows 10 from a USB stick should make it easier for anyone who is unable to download the software for whatever reason, and caters for the increasing number of modern laptop users who don't have access to a DVD drive.

However, the majority of people who have bought a laptop in the past few years will already be on Windows 7 or 8.1 anyway, so will be eligible for the free download offer and won't want to have to pay for either of the physical formats Microsoft is offering.

Even if you don't qualify for the free upgrade because you're still using Windows XP or Vista, you will still have the option to download the software – you'll just have to pay for it first. Prices have yet to be confirmed, but the Home version is expected to cost £99.99.

What do we think?

This is a good move on Microsoft's part, as it makes it easier to upgrade to the most eagerly anticipated (and most hyped) new operating system in years.

In the future, things will be easier – indeed, this might be the first and last instance of Windows being offered on USB. From now on, Microsoft intends to update Windows on an ongoing basis, rather than release completely new versions – as happened between Windows 7 and 8. Users will therefore receive regular updates rather than having to completely reinstall the operating system. This should mean new features arrive quicker than before, though some users may get fed up with constant updates.

For more information, read our 'Windows 10: The Truth' Cover Feature on page 38

FIRST LOOK

Humax Freesat HDR-1100S

www.humaxdigital.com

The Freesat HDR-1100S is the successor to Humax's much-loved Freesat+ PVR box, the HDR-1010S. The new model differs from its predecessor primarily in that it's significantly smaller and adds Wi-Fi connectivity.

The size reduction is mainly due to Humax dropping the front LCD screen, which was largely redundant because you can easily tell what channel you're watching using your remote control and TV screen. Also gone is the SCART slot – again, we doubt many people will miss it. As with other Freesat boxes, the HDR-1100S provides 200 free TV and radio channels (including 11 HD channels) once you've connected it to a satellite dish (bought separately).

Using Freesat's award-winning TV guide, Freetime, you can also catch up on any programmes from the past seven days across 26 channels, and you can pause, rewind and record live TV using the box's built-in hard drive.

Navigating the Freetime menus was smooth and straightforward and we also liked the Freesat app for Android and iOS, which lets you set programme reminders and recordings on the go.

The HDR-1100S has two USB ports that you can use to access photos, videos and music. The device also has built-in Ethernet, providing a faster and more stable network connection than the integrated Wi-Fi, which is handy if you want to stream content from a NAS drive. Lastly, there's HDMI or composite for connecting to your TV and an optical connection for audio.



Overall, we really liked the HDR-1100S, and it does well to build on many of the things we already loved in its predecessor. The new box is available in black and white in three sizes: 500GB (£189), 1TB (£219) and 2TB (£299).

WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will Microsoft stop making Windows Phones?

Microsoft boss Satya Nadella has dismissed rumours that the company is considering pulling out of the mobile phone business and killing off the Windows Phone mobile OS. Nadella told website ZDNet: "We will do everything we have to do to make sure we're making progress on phones". He said that even if no company wanted to build phones running Windows, Microsoft would continue to do so itself. "There will be Lumia devices," he promised.

The Microsoft boss suggested that the company's Lumia handsets could turn out to be Microsoft's equivalent of the iMac, which helped swing Apple out of long-term decline on its way to becoming the world's biggest technology company.

"You've got to remember even the Apple regeneration started with colourful iMacs," Nadella argued. "So let us first get the colourful iMacs. I think with what we're doing with Lumia, we're at that stage. I want to do good devices that people like, and then we will go on to do the next thing and the next thing."

He was forced into defending Microsoft's mobile ambitions following the company's announcement a week earlier that it was cutting 7,800 jobs, most of them in the phones division, and writing off $7.6bn related to the $9.5bn it spent buying Nokia in 2013.

Nadella said fewer Lumia devices would be built in the future, leading to speculation that Microsoft was considering scrapping Windows Phone and choosing instead to focus solely on Windows for computers.



LIKELIHOOD RATING

✓✓✓✓✓

Nadella may have stretched the point by comparing Lumia phones to Apple's iMac, but his bullishness is persuasive. And while Microsoft lost the first battles of the phone wars to Apple and Google, the market is too lucrative for the company to ignore. Plus, Nadella wants developers to write 'universal' apps for Windows 10 on PCs, phones and tablets. It's a crucial part of the company's 'free upgrade' strategy.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

TrackerPad

bit.ly/tracker376 | **From £30**



Thanks to built-in GPS, it's relatively easy to find a lost phone these days, but what about non-electronic items such as your wallet, bike and umbrella? TrackerPad holds the answer in the form of a reusable GPS label that you can stick to everyday items to track them via its free mobile app. It's roughly the same size as a 10p piece, so thieves probably won't notice it's even there, and has a battery life of seven days. Funding closes on 12 August, with £13,000 raised at the time of writing.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Google teaching children to code for free

From 21 July to 27 August, Google is holding a series of classes teaching 5-12-year-olds coding and other digital skills as part of its Summer of Science initiative.

Twitter introduces Safety Center

Twitter has launched Safety Center (https://about.twitter.com/safety) to "promote good digital citizenship" on the site. It includes advice on how to mute, block and report abusive tweets using the social network's existing features.

WE DON'T LIKE...

Reddit allows racist community to survive

Following the recent resignation of Reddit's chief executive Ellen Pao, one of the company's co-founders has outlined new rules banning certain types of offensive content, but has stopped short of banning communities dedicated to racist jokes and propaganda.

Microsoft Font Driver hit by critical flaw

Following July's Patch Tuesday (see page 14), details of a critical vulnerability affecting Microsoft Font Driver were made public, forcing Microsoft to issue an urgent security update outside its usual schedule. Hackers can use the flaw to take control of PCs.

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger could face ban

Popular messaging services that use encryption could be outlawed if the government passes its Investigatory Powers Bill, according to security firm Sophos. The new laws are designed to stop terrorists from communicating using methods that can't be tracked by the security services, and would require tech companies to remove encryption from their apps and hand over data to the authorities when required. bit.ly/snooper376

Millions of XP users exposed to threats

Microsoft is no longer providing the Malicious Software Removal Tool or updates to Microsoft Security Essentials for machines using Windows XP. This leaves 180 million XP users at risk of attack, says security company Bitdefender. Microsoft withdrew support for Windows XP on 8 April 2014 and stopped providing Windows Security Essentials for download on XP, but continued to provide updates to existing users to give them time to upgrade to a newer version of Windows. Users who have no other anti-virus software on their PCs are most at risk, Bitdefender says. bit.ly/xp376

PATCH TUESDAY: July

July's Patch Tuesday could be the last of its kind, since Microsoft has pledged to push security patches to Windows 10 as they are developed rather than in a single monthly update. The second Tuesday of July saw Microsoft release 14 bulletins, fixing dozens of vulnerabilities. Twenty-nine of these flaws were patched by bulletin MS15-065, a major update for Internet Explorer that affects all versions of the browser since IE6. The most serious of these vulnerabilities lets a hacker remotely access a victim's PC by tricking them into visiting an infected web page. This and three other bulletins were given Microsoft's highest severity rating of Critical. These included bulletin MS15-066, which fixed a vulnerability in the operating system's VBScript scripting engine; bulletin MS15-067, which patched a flaw in Window 7's and Windows 8's Remote Desktop Protocol; and bulletin MS15-068, which affected Windows Hyper V. All three fixed flaws that could have been exploited by hackers to give them remote access to other people's computers. bit.ly/july376

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: David Emm, Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky Lab (www.kaspersky.co.uk)

KASPERSKY lab

Q Is it safe to trust password managers when even LastPass can be hacked?

Jamie Dale, Facebook

A Security breaches are always bad news. But it's worth noting that the LastPass breach didn't result in the theft of customers' master passwords – just the hashes and salts used to verify their access to the service. This was only a problem for anyone who had chosen a weak master password – hence LastPass's advice to change this password. Nor did they get access to the vault holding individual customer passwords. So while no solution can be deemed 100-per-cent secure, using a password manager is safer than using one password for every online account you hold, and much easier than trying to remember numerous complicated passwords. For anyone who's reluctant to use an online service, there are password managers that store the data on your own computer.

Q Have there been any instances yet of malware targeted at wearables?

Luke Burgess, Twitter

A Although there have as yet been no malware threats aimed specifically at wearables, they are still as susceptible to attack as other connected devices. Like computers, wearable devices are built on familiar operating systems and have vulnerabilities that can be exploited. The problem is, since security and privacy are not a priority for developers, these devices are not built with security front of mind.

One of our researchers recently managed to hack into his own smart bracelet (see bit.ly/bracelet376), and found that in some cases you can connect to a wearable device without the owner even knowing.

And remember, the risk doesn't just come from malware being installed *on* a wearable. If the device used to access it, such as a smartphone, is compromised, the data stored on the wearable may be compromised too.

+ Email us your security questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk

heart internet

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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

MAPS

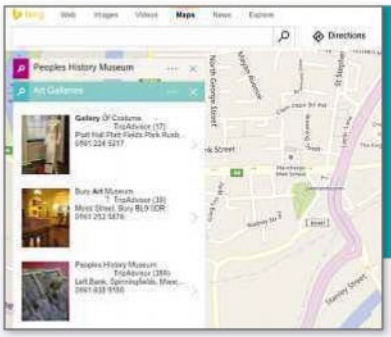
RELAUNCH

Bing Maps

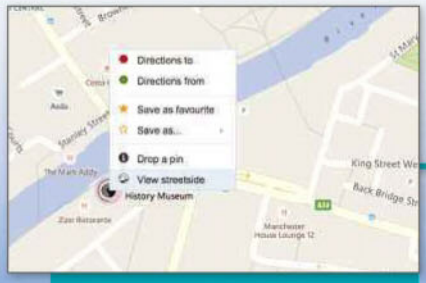
www.bing.com/mapspreview

Bing Maps' redesign has finally brought it level with Google's rival online-mapping tool. It provides a seamless feature-packed experience by layering useful information about places of interest on a map that now takes up the entire browser window. You can right-click locations to save them as favourites in My Places, view them at street level and ask for directions. Real-time traffic information shows your likely journey time and potential routes to avoid. We love Bing's new emphasis on sharing maps and the 'Along the Route' feature that suggests possible stop-off points.

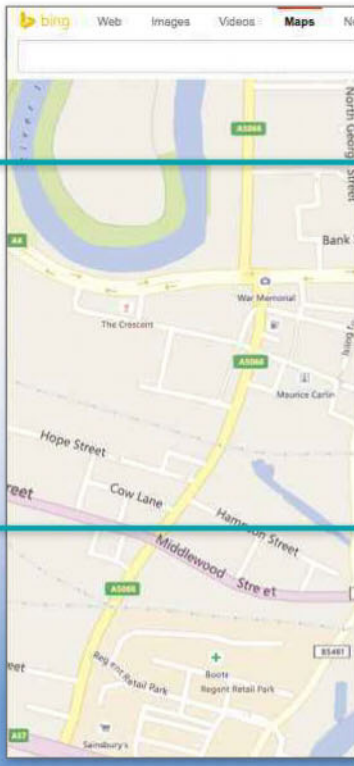
Our rating ★★★★★

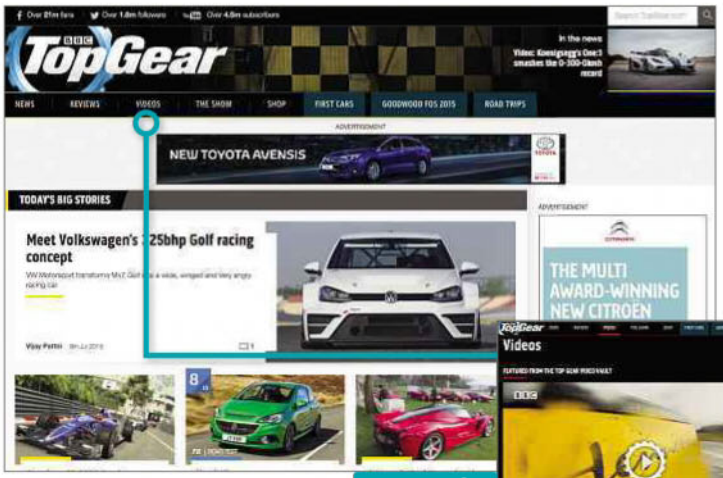


NEARBY
Explore local amenities and attractions, based on your search



DIRECTIONS
Drop a pin, save a location and get directions to and from it





RELAUNCH

TRAVEL

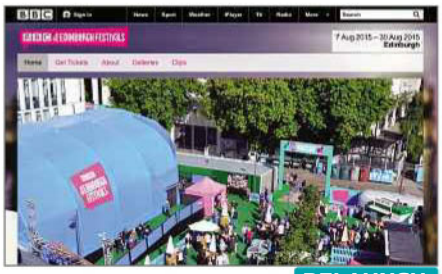
Top Gear

www.topgear.com



Jeremy Clarkson and his sidekicks may have crashed out of BBC 2's *Top Gear*, but the show's website is motoring on with a well-timed revamp. Adopting a bolder, blog-like look, the site requires a lot more scrolling than it did before but remains packed with news and irreverent features. It also offers lots of *Top Gear* TV archive material, including some juicy behind-the-scenes footage (though not of the infamous fracas, alas). As you'd expect, the opinion columns "from the boys" have now been dropped but there is no doubt that this website knows its audience and upping a gear in this way will do it no harm at all as it races into its new era.

Our rating ★★★★☆



RELAUNCH

FESTIVAL

BBC at the Edinburgh Festivals

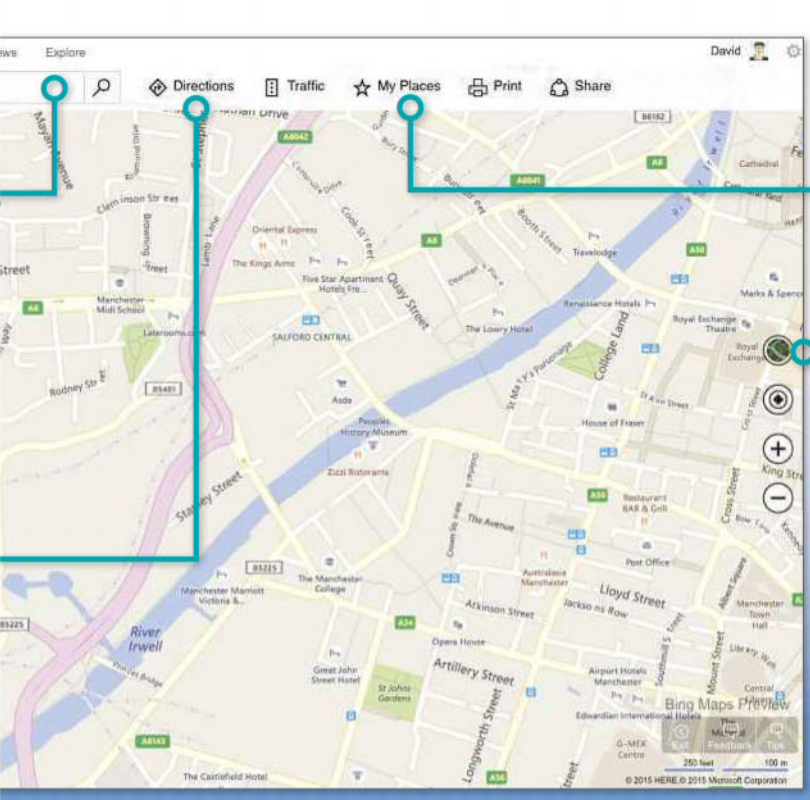
www.bbc.co.uk/events/ednq2m

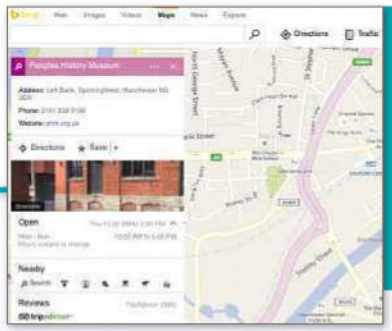
The BBC is presenting live shows and broadcasts from its own Edinburgh venue to cover the city's arts festivals from 7 to 30 August. This photo-led site acts as a guide to free events being staged by the Beeb, with a section that allows festival visitors to grab audience tickets for shows such as Radio 4's *Front Row* and the regular Fresh from the Fringe broadcasts. Tickets are going fast but if you've missed out or can't go, there is still plenty to see, from online galleries and videos to links to other useful websites.

Our rating ★★★★☆

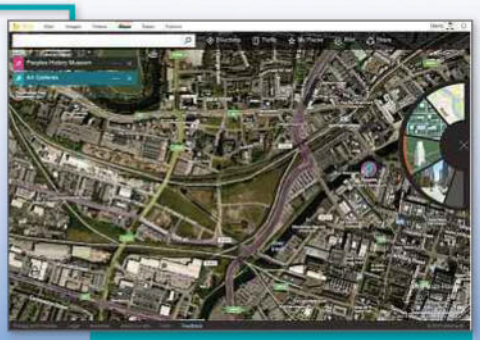
Reviews by David Crookes

We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features





DETAILS
Click a place of interest to display a panel packed with information about it



VIEWS
Switch between road, aerial, birds-eye and Streetside views



NEW

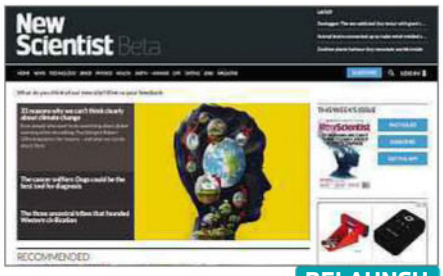
SHOPPING

Big Apple Buddy

www.bigapplebuddy.com

Ever tried to buy something in the US, only to find that the store won't ship it to the UK? Big Apple Buddy offers to help by arranging for the item to be sent to its own offices before having it delivered to you via DHL, Fedex and UPS. To use the service, you must fill in a form with details of your item. The site's team then looks for the best price before buying, repacking and delivering it for $40 (about £26) or less per item. The goods should reach you within four days but you have to wait 24 hours for your quote to arrive. The main drawback is that you can only place one order at a time.

Our rating ★★★☆☆



RELAUNCH

SCIENCE

New Scientist

www.newscientist.com

The website for the weekly science and technology magazine has long been packed with interesting articles, news and opinion, but it was starting to look rather tired. This visual revamp (which is still in beta) gives it a fresh, modern appearance and tidies up the content. Homepage links to galleries and the Last Word blog are gone, allowing breathing space for its new sections: Humans and Earth. Colour-coding makes navigating the site much easier and the design makes more effective use of images. There's also an Editor's Pick, which highlights noteworthy content.

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

CAMPAIGN

Stop Online Abuse

www.stoponlineabuse.org.uk

Online abuse is a pressing problem, but we're not entirely sure if this website created by Galop, an LGBT anti-violence charity, is the answer. Its aim of tackling abuse aimed at women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people is commendable, but the site is rather wordy and the execution is a tad dull. That said, there's plenty of useful information including links to support organisations, local police stations and a national reporting facility. There's also a Quick Exit button that takes you to the BBC homepage, in case you don't want to be seen checking out the site.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

Tell us about your website via webuser@dennis.co.uk



RELAUNCH

THEATRE

Gecko Theatre

geckotheatre.com

The Gecko physical theatre company has created a moody and eye-catching website that successfully reflects its ethos. It serves as an excellent example of a top-notch cultural site: interactive, engaging and arousing curiosity in those who visit. Although the homepage is mainly black and white, hovering over the images brings out their colour and the links point you to current and past performances, with video trailers to whet the appetite of audiences. With clear links to mailing lists, social-media pages and information on Gecko's many development programmes, the site displays plenty of flair and attention.

Our rating ★★★★★



RELAUNCH

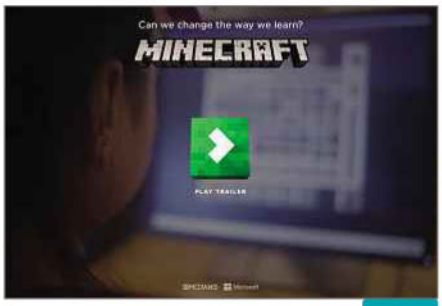
FLIGHTS

Jet Airways

www.jetairways.com

Jet Airways is India's premier international airline, with flights to Asia from many UK airports. Its previous website was messy and old-fashioned but this welcome revamp is swish and first class, and now provides a much better experience on mobile devices. The flight-search tool is prominently placed and there is a highlighted section showing the best deals. Navigation has also been improved with clearer options that allow you to plan your travel and quickly find information. Helpfully, payment can be made in sterling and there are options for seat selection and express checkout.

Our rating ★★★★☆



NEW

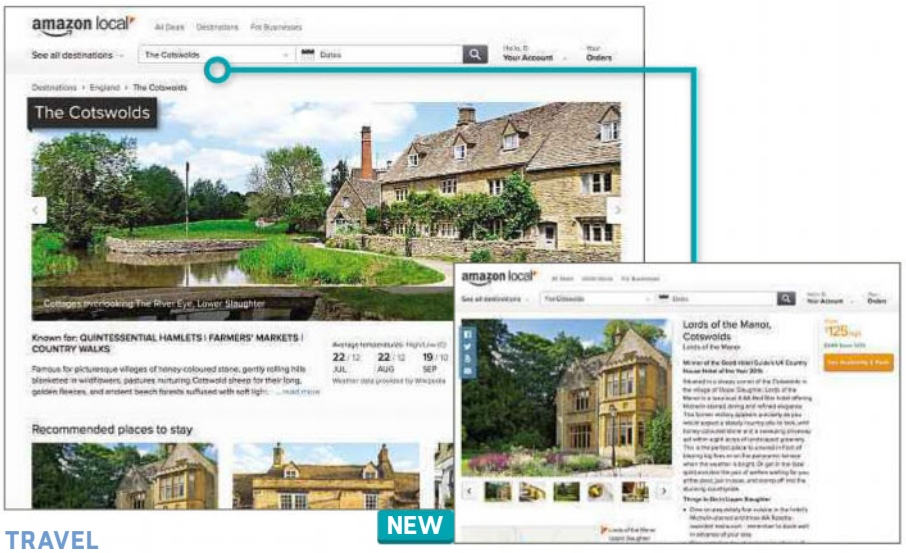
GAMES

Education Minecraft

education.minecraft.net

Microsoft bought block-based game Minecraft for $2.5bn in 2014 and has ever since been looking for ways to capitalise on its potential. As well as demonstrating its HoloLens headset using an Augmented Reality version of the game, Microsoft has now launched this online educational resource. The site is still in its infancy but a one-minute trailer indicates what's to come. The company wants educators to use Minecraft in the classroom and is encouraging teachers to sign up to share hints and tips with each other. Given the greater emphasis on computing in the school curriculum, this could become a huge success.

Our rating ★★★☆☆



NEW

TRAVEL

Amazon Destinations

local.amazon.co.uk/travel

Amazon has offered hotel deals for a while but its new Destinations site aims to venture further into travel discounts. The site features many head-turning UK escapes, which are accompanied by attractive photos and organised according to their proximity to you, and makes booking a hotel as easy as buying a book. Rather than bombard you with choices, Destinations keeps the site clean and simple by making a handful of recommendations while drawing your attention to highlighted deals. The Availability option clearly shows the price of each night's stay – you just select your preferred period and click Buy to be on your way to a relaxing stay.

Our rating ★★★★★



RELAUNCH

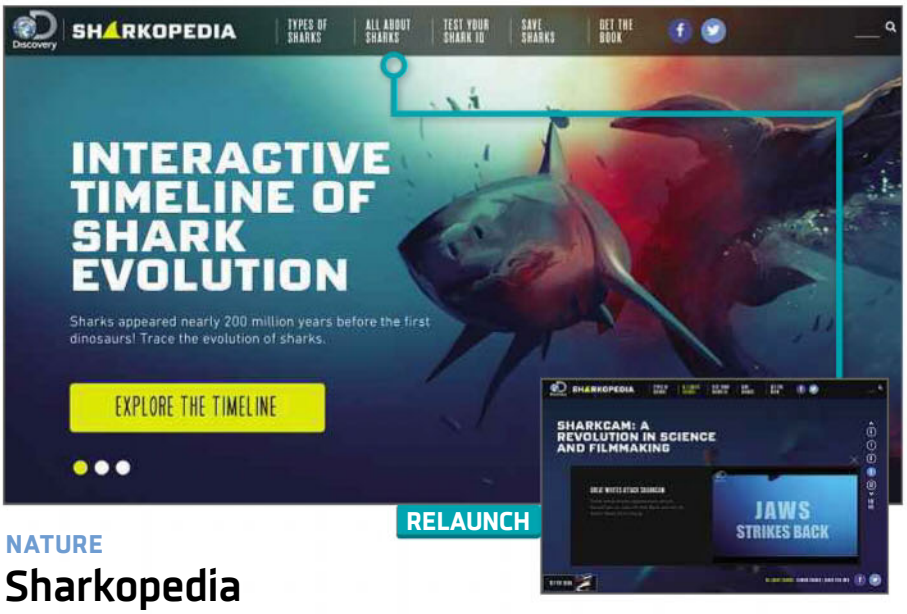
FASHION

Accurist

www.accurist.co.uk

The streamlined and sophisticated Accurist website lets its range of fancy watches do the talking. The site ticks all the usual boxes with sections for men and women, a store finder and the latest Accurist news (although this only contained four articles when we visited). The big surprise is the site's Our Story section: rather than offering a cursory overview of the company, the site breaks down its history into 11 notable periods, taking readers on a journey from 1946 to the present day. If you want to buy a watch, each model is accompanied by lots of information and the site also recommends alternatives.

Our rating ★★★★☆



RELAUNCH

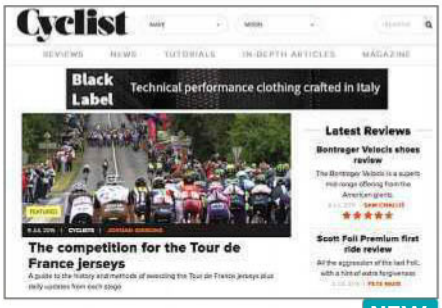
NATURE

Sharkopedia

sharkopedia.discovery.com

The Discovery Channel's Shark Week programmes have been running since 1988, offering fascinating insights into one of the sea's most fearsome predators. Sharkopedia is a great accompanying resource, presenting tons of information in a fun and educational manner via a variety of techniques. These range from timelines and videos to interviews and illustrations. Clicking Surprise Me takes you to a random piece of content and you can test your knowledge with a Shark IQ quiz. You can also learn how to help conserve endangered sharks and discover the different species that dominate the oceans. Every click and scroll reveals compelling nuggets of information and you'll be watching reruns of *Jaws* in a whole new light.

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

CYCLING

Cyclist

www.cyclist.co.uk

Created by the people behind *Cyclist* magazine, this is a comprehensive resource for anyone who likes to get on their bike to explore the great outdoors. The site's tutorials cover a variety of topics including replacing items on your bicycle and tips on climbing hills. There's also an interesting and varied selection of well-written, in-depth articles, along with reviews that provide expert opinions and analysis of everything from wheels and brakes to shoes and jerseys. We particularly like how you can quickly navigate to information about a specific bike using the drop-down Make and Model menus.

Our rating ★★★★★

ALSO NEW

HEALTH

Organ Donor Register

organdonation.nhs.uk

★★★★☆

This new NHS site asks you one simple question: do you want to donate your organs after you die? Click No and it will accept your decision, but provide you with information about your choice and let you register to uphold your refusal. Click Yes and you can join the Organ Donor Register and decide what to donate. It's informative, direct and totally non-judgmental.

ACTIVITIES

Here & Now

www.here-now.com

★★★★☆

With the school holidays upon us, you can use this site to find activities in your area to entertain the kids. Enter your postcode or let Here & Now recommend museums, parks, playgrounds, swimming pools and much more, which you can click to book through their websites or save to your favourites for later.

PRIVACY

Ghostery

www.ghostery.com

★★★★☆

The relaunched website for the popular privacy tool puts a human face on "protecting your digital experience" by using photos of smiling people, consumer and business blogs and a clear explanation of what Ghostery does and why. There's also an interesting new tool called Ghostery TrackerMap LiveScan that scans any URL you enter for hidden trackers.

EVENTS

MyTicket

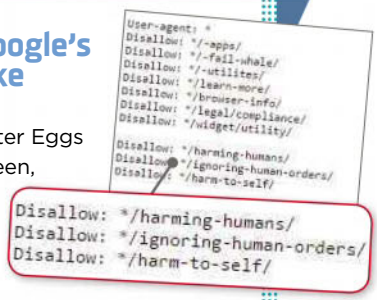
myticket.co.uk

★★★☆☆

Buy tickets for concerts, festivals and other live events promoted by Kilimanjaro Live at this simple but serviceable site. The endless-scrolling homepage lets you browse posters for gigs including Supertramp Forever and the Four Seasons by Candlelight, and then click to buy your ticket or hotel-and-travel package.

WEBSITE SECRETS

Reveal Google's robots joke



In one of the geekiest Easter Eggs we've ever seen, Google has concealed a reference to Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics (bit.ly/robotics376) within the 'robots.txt' for its Nest website (nest.com). As you may know, 'robots.txt' info is used by sites to tell search engines which pages they should and shouldn't index. Visit nest.com/robots.txt and you'll see the message:

Disallow: */harming-humans/
Disallow: */ignoring-human-orders/
Disallow: */harm-to-self/

In other words, Asimov's rules that robots must not harm humans or ignore human orders, and must protect their own existence. Well, we did say it was geeky!

WebUser

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Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Stop using Flash

It looks like Flash is on its last legs after another spate of security problems hit the software recently. These resulted in Firefox changing its default settings to block the software completely (see page 8 for more), and Chrome also blocking it for non-core elements of web pages, such as adverts. If your site uses Flash for animations, widgets or other special features, we'd recommend you consider switching to something else, before the browsers decide to block it completely.

Hack your WordPress website

One of the great things about WordPress (www.wordpress.org) is that it's open, so you're free to tweak it in any way you like. If you've ever delved into the WordPress code on your website (using the Editor that's on the Appearance menu of your Dashboard) to work out how to change its look and feel, you'll have seen lots of Template Tags. These are the bits of text among the PHP coding language tags that WordPress templates use to grab information from its database. There are nearly 200 Template Tags in WordPress and, if you rearrange them or add new ones, you can change how your site is displayed.

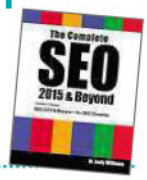
If you want to find out more, the Tuts+ website has a brilliant new guide at bit.ly/tuts376, which is a great way to start exploring what Template Tags can do.

Deal of the Fortnight

123-reg (www.123-reg.co.uk) is offering .info domains for £1.19 for the first year, down from £14.98.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Dr Andy Williams, SEO Expert and author (ezSEONews.com)



Q I think bad sites are linking to my website and are having a negative impact on my SEO. Can I stop them?

Mike Ford, via email

A Poor-quality inbound links can hurt your rankings, so this a serious problem. The bad news is that you can't stop websites from linking to you. The good news is you can request that Google ignore these links using Google's Disavow Tool. You'll need to register your site with Google's Search Console (www.google.com/webmasters/tools) to get access to it but, once registered, you can put together and submit a text file containing the offending links (or sites). Use the Disavow Tool with caution and be aware there's no guarantee that Google will remove the bad links.

MINI WORKSHOP | Scan your website for SEO problems

BeamUsUp WebCrawler: beamusup.com | 10 mins | Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8.1+, Mac OS X, Linux

Boosting your site's Google ranking is hard if you don't know where to start. BeamUsUp's WebCrawler scans your site and highlights areas that are holding it back. It doesn't need to be installed but it does require Java



1 Load the software and type the URL of the site you want to test into the URL bar. 1 Click the Start/Stop button. 2 The software scans your site to see whether it has any problems you can fix – you can see how it's doing in the progress bar. 3 Problems will be listed below, as they are discovered. 4



2 When the progress bar shows Finished, 1 click one of the warnings listed. 2 This will show you the URLs of the offending pages, 3 and list the problems WebCrawler found. 4 Click the Show All Filtered URLs 5 button to see all the problems at once, or the Show All URLs button 6 for a global list of all pages that have been checked.



3 Because you don't have to install the WebCrawler, you lose all data when you close it. You can always repeat the scan, of course, but a better option is to export your data. The first three Export buttons 1 create CSV files that will open in any spreadsheet. You can also export straight into Excel 2 and Google Drive 3 if you prefer.

Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Wi-Fi extenders

Does your Wi-Fi network fade to nothing when you move away from your router? **Andy Shaw** tests 11 extenders that can stretch your signal to reach every corner of your home

Wi-Fi makes home networking incredibly convenient, but the signal can fail if your router is positioned too far away from the rooms where you need it. A Wi-Fi extender can be positioned between your router and any problem areas to give your wireless signal greater reach. We tested 11 Wi-Fi extenders to find out which is the best.

HOW WE TESTED

We tested the extenders in a domestic environment by connecting two PCs to a Linksys EA6900 AC1900 router: one using a Gigabit Ethernet cable and the other via an AC1900 PCI Express extender. To measure the network speed of each type of network, on each adapter, we transferred a 500MB video file from the router-connected PC to the distant one. In the first test, the distant PC was placed 12m away, on a separate floor; in the second, it was in an out-building 20m away. In each test, the Wi-Fi extender was placed optimally between the two PCs.

Netgear Nighthawk AC1900 Extender | £130 | www.netgear.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★☆

WebUser GOLD AWARD

The Nighthawk looks more like a router than a traditional Wi-Fi extender. It has three large antennas sticking out the back, alongside five Gigabit Ethernet ports and a single USB 3 port (which can share printers and storage).

It supports the high-end AC1900 variant of 802.11ac Wi-Fi, providing up to 1,300Mbps (megabits per second) on the 5GHz bandwidth and 600Mbps on 2.4GHz, as long as you have compatible triple-antenna adapters that also support the standard. You'll be hard pushed to find many AC1900 adapters or devices, other than PCI cards of the kind we used in our tests, but more are likely to appear in the future. When they do, this extender will be ready.

The well-designed wizard makes it easy to find your existing networks and create extended ones. You have to sign up with an email address and password, which is an unnecessary extra step, but that's our only complaint.

Positioning the extender is also very simple. Both network bands have their own signal-strength meter, so you can easily tell when it's placed in the optimum spot. And because it's so powerful, it can hold a stable link even if it's further away from your router, so you have greater flexibility over where it sits.

Performance is exceptionally good. Even on the 2.4GHz band, we recorded speeds of 12.8MB/s (megabytes per second) in our mid-range tests. This increased to 17.9MB/s and a storming 20.1MB/s with 5GHz 802.11n and 802.11ac connections. The Nighthawk's speeds dropped in our long-range tests, but they were still acceptable and ahead of any rival extenders. In fact, this was the only non-HomePlug extender to keep a stable signal to our out-building, maintaining a speed of 5.2MB/s.



VERDICT ★★★★★

The Netgear Nighthawk is expensive, but it's fast, powerful and built to last. Its Wi-Fi networks have more speed and power than most of your hardware will need, but this guarantees longevity, because it will be able to cope with the next generation of devices, which are likely to come with Wi-Fi standards that make full use of the Nighthawk's advanced tools. It came top in all our speed tests, which makes it the best Wi-Fi extender you can buy.

ALSO TESTED

BT Dual-Band Wi-Fi Extender 600, D-Link DAP-1520, Netgear WN3000RP, Trendnet TPL-410APK

Linksys RE6500 | £75 | www.linksys.com/gb

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆
EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★☆

WebUser SILVER AWARD



Like the Netgear Nighthawk, this Linksys model looks more like a router than a HomePlug. It's an AC1200 device, claiming speeds of up to 876Mbps on the 5GHz network and 300Mbps on 2.4GHz. It also has four Gigabit Ethernet ports and a 3.5mm socket, so you can plug in speakers and stream music to it. Setup could be better – there's no mention of WPS in the instructions and no help with positioning – but with some experimentation, we managed to find effective spots for both our tests.

The RE6500 was a consistently good performer in our mid-range tests, scoring just behind the Netgear, Asus and ZyXEL extenders in the 5GHz band and just ahead of Asus and ZyXEL on the 2.4GHz network. What's more, it held up better in our long-range tests, where it jostled for supremacy with the Gold Award-winning Nighthawk.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

The RE6500 wasn't the top performer across the board but it's up there with the best at long range, particularly on the 5GHz network. It also has music streaming and four Gigabit Ethernet ports, and is much cheaper than the Nighthawk.

Asus RP-AC52 | £57 | www.asus.com

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆☆
EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★☆

WebUser BRONZE AWARD



For a smaller device, the Asus RP-AC52 has some impressive features, including a handy nightlight, which can help you find your way around your hall or landing in the dark. It can also be used to stream music to a set of speakers, as long as you use Asus's own AiPlayer Android app. Its single Ethernet port is of the Fast Ethernet standard rather than Gigabit, though, which is a bit disappointing.

Setup isn't this extender's strong point, with a clunky, browser-based configuration tool, though you can use WPS if you like. However, it does have a useful Wi-Fi-strength indicator to help position it.

It performed well in our tests, hitting a respectable 14.5MB/s on the 802.11ac network in our mid-range test, and still delivered good results across the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands in the long-range tests.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

The Asus comes in a small HomePlug-style case that attaches directly to a power socket. It's not as powerful as the Netgear and Linksys models, and it lacks any extra Ethernet ports, but it can still stream audio via an Android device.

TP-Link TL-WPA4230P | £78 uk.tp-link.com



The TL-WPA4230P is a HomePlug kit, so you plug the basic unit in near your router and connect it via the supplied Ethernet cable, then position the Wi-Fi extender where you want your Wi-Fi hotspot to be. Like all HomePlug devices, it takes barely any setup. The device managed 11MB/s at mid-range and 4.9MB/s at long-range, coming close to the 2.4GHz Wi-Fi speed of the fastest devices here, but it doesn't use the 5GHz network. However, we found these HomePlugs to be the best device for getting an extremely stable Wi-Fi signal to our out-building in the garden.

VERDICT ★★★☆☆

ZyXEL WRE6505 | £47 www.zyxel.com/uk



ZyXEL's AC750 extender is one of the smallest devices we tested. It has a Fast Ethernet port and some lights to indicate signal strength, which help to position it in the best location. It can also be configured to optimise your network for speed or distance.

It performed best at medium range on the 5GHz networks, with 16.8MB/s on 802.11n and 18.3MB/s on 802.11ac. However, its long range performance was poor and its performance over the 2.4GHz network was near the bottom of the group.

VERDICT ★★★☆☆

Linksys RE1400W | £45 www.linksys.com/gb



The Linksys RE1400W can extend a 5GHz network, but it only works with 802.11n networks, not 802.11ac. Its performance was middling in our tests, reaching 11.2MB/s and 13MB/s across the 2.4GHz and 5GHz networks at short range, but dropping to 3.5MB/s and 3.3MB/s at long range. Usefully, it can double as a wireless audio streamer and only requires that you plug in a set of speakers, then stream from an DLNA-compatible player, so it will even work with Windows Media Player's Play To tool.

VERDICT ★★★☆☆

TP-Link RE210 | £44 | uk.tp-link.com



TP-Link's RE210 is the only 802.11ac wall-plug extender in our test with a Gigabit Ethernet port. It's easy to set up using WPS, but there isn't much guidance on position, other than the manual suggesting you place it equidistant between your router and adapter. At medium range, the 802.11n 2.4GHz speeds reached 10.4MB/s but its 5GHz was 7.9MB/s. 802.11ac was faster, at 9MB/s, but that's far behind the fastest devices we tested. Long-range tests held up better, recording 4.5MB/s on the 2.4GHz network, but it dropped down the rankings on the 5GHz networks.

VERDICT ★★★☆☆

					
	Netgear Nighthawk AC1900 Extender	Linksys RE6500	Asus RP-AC52	TP-Link TL-WPA4230P	ZyXEL WRE6505
WEBSITE	www.netgear.co.uk	www.linksys.com/gb	www.asus.com	uk.tp-link.com	www.zyxel.com/uk
PRICE	£130	£75	£57	£78	£47
BUY FROM	www.broadbandbuyer.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.dabs.com	www.amazon.co.uk
WI-FI STANDARD	AC1900	AC1200	AC750	N300	AC750
DUAL-BAND	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
MIMO STREAM CONFIGURATION	3x3	2x2	2x2	2x2	2x2
ANTENNA PLACEMENT	External	External	Internal	Internal	Internal
LAN PORTS	5 x Gigabit Ethernet	3 x Gigabit Ethernet	1 x Fast Ethernet	3 x Fast Ethernet	1 x Fast Ethernet
USB/ESATA PORTS	USB 3	✗	✗	✗	✗
SECURITY TYPES	WPA, WPA2	WPA, WPA2	WPA, WPA2	WPA, WPA2	WPA, WPA2
PARENTAL CONTROLS	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
WPS BUTTON	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
POSITIONING ASSISTANCE	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
BROWSER-BASED SETUP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
USE EXISTING SSIDS/ CREATE NEW SSIDS	Optional/Yes	Yes/Optional	Optional/Yes	Optional/Yes	Optional/Yes
ACCESS POINT MODE	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
POWER SWITCH	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
ETHERNET CABLE SUPPLIED	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
ADDITIONAL FEATURES	DLNA server, printer sharing	Audio streaming	Audio streaming, LED nightlight, touch panel	✗	✗
DIMENSIONS	252 x 174 x 31mm	152 x 107 x 28mm	121 x 77 x 71mm	126 x 64 x 42mm	91 x 62 x 47mm
WARRANTY	2-years return-to-base	1-year return-to-base	3-years return-to-base	3-years return-to-base	2-years return-to-base

OUR VERDICT

If you want to extend your Wi-Fi network, you probably want to extend it as far and as fast as you can. Our Gold Award-winner, the Netgear Nighthawk, is an expensive option but it's also the best at its job. It uses all the latest standards, which means it's more future-proof, because it shouldn't get overtaken by new standards on Wi-Fi devices any time soon.

The Linksys RE6500 receives our Silver Award for offering the best alternative to Netgear's speed, especially over long range, and for a very attractive price. If you're on a tighter budget but still want a top-class Wi-Fi extender, it's well worth considering.

Our third-place Bronze Award goes to the Asus RP-AC52. It's the only HomePlug-style extender in our top three, which makes it smaller and more compact than the other award-winners. Although it doesn't have as many extras such as Ethernet ports, it can still be used to connect to a pair of speakers for streaming music over Wi-Fi.



Web User's Best Buys

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

WI-FI EXTENDER



Netgear Nighthawk AC1900 Extender

£130 from www.broadbandbuyer.co.uk
Date tested: July 2015

The Netgear Nighthawk is pricey, but it's also fast, powerful and built to last. Its advanced tools will be compatible with future Wi-Fi standards and it provides excellent performance.

KEY SPECS

AC1900 Wi-Fi ■ Dual-band ■ 5 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ USB 3 ■ WPA and WPA2 security ■ DLNA server ■ 252 x 174 x 31mm ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty

NETWORK CAMERA



Y-cam HomeMonitor HD

£150 from www.homemonitor.me
Date tested: June 2015

The Y-cam HomeMonitor HD will save you money in the long run if you want to save captured motion-detected footage online. Its free online storage option supports a wide range of devices.

KEY SPECS

Apps for Android, iOS, Windows Phone, Roku ■ 1/4in CMOS sensor ■ Viewing angle: horizontal 80°, vertical 45°, diagonal 87° ■ 1,280 x 720 pixels resolution ■ 15fps frame rate ■ Ethernet and 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 85 x 85 x 30mm ■ 1150g

BUDGET PC



Chillblast Fusion Cyborg

£600 with monitor, £500 without from www.chillblast.com
Date tested: May 2015

The Chillblast Fusion Cyborg is compact, quiet and capable of excellent performance. There isn't much room in the case for future expansion, but it's a great value PC.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-4460 ■ 8GB of memory ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 21.5in monitor ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 3 x USB 3 ports, 5 x USB 2 ports ■ Windows 7 or 8.1 ■ 427 x 364 x 189 mm ■ Three years return-to-base warranty

BUDGET LAPTOP



HP Stream 11

£179.99 from store.hp.com/ukstore
Date tested: April 2015

The HP Stream 11 offers excellent performance and a respectable battery life. It's a sleek, attractive laptop, available in blue or magenta, with a good screen that offers wide viewing angles.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2840 processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 11.6in non-touchscreen ■ 32GB flash drive ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ Single-band 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 300 x 206 x 20mm ■ 1.29kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

MULTIROOM SPEAKER



Sonos Play:1

£167 from www.currys.co.uk
Date tested: March 2015

The Sonos Play:1 offers impressive audio quality and comes with excellent software and great apps that provide seamless integration with music services. It's the ideal speaker to use as a starting point for a home entertainment system.

KEY SPECS

Two speakers ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Compatible with UPnP and SMB servers ■ AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG and WAV ■ 161 x 12 x 12mm ■ 1.8kg

SSD



Samsung 850 Pro 256GB

£136.03 from www.kikatek.com
Date tested: February 2015

The Samsung 850 Pro is crammed with new technology that makes it faster and more durable than its competitors. You could buy a similarly sized SSD for much less, but in our tests the cheaper models weren't as fast and they don't come with the 850 Pro's generous 10-year warranty.

KEY SPECS

256GB (also available in 128GB, 512GB & 1TB) ■ 53p per GB ■ SATA III interface ■ 2.5in drive case ■ 10-year warranty ■ 100 x 70 x 7mm ■ 66g

All prices correct at time of review

TABLET

Google Nexus 9

£319 from play.google.com
Date tested: February 2015



The Nexus 9 is our favourite Android tablet. It has a fantastic screen, even better than the iPad Air 2's, and superb battery life, lasting over 15 hours in our tests. It's cheaper than the latest iPad and comes in 16GB and 32GB capacities.

KEY SPECS
8.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ Dual-core 2.3GHz 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 Denver processor ■ 16/32GB storage ■ 4G option costs £60 extra (32GB models only) ■ Android 5.0 ■ 228 x 154 x 8mm ■ 425g

WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

£449.95 from www.johnlewis.com
Date tested: January 2015



This touchscreen laptop folds over into a chunky tablet. It's well built, did well in our performance tests and has a fantastic battery life.

KEY SPECS
Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 13.3in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 326 x 232 x 22mm ■ 1.75kg ■ One-year collect-and-return warranty

WIRELESS ROUTER

D-Link DIR-868L

£65.97 from www.dabs.com
Date tested: December 2014



If you're willing to switch your wireless devices to the 5GHz network, the D-Link DIR-868L offers fast and reliable performance at a great price. It's simple to set up and provides a handy wizard to guide you through the process.

KEY SPECS
Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz ■ 802.11b/g/n ■ 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed ■ Six internal antennas ■ 4 x 10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet ports ■ WPA and WPA2 encryption ■ 1 x USB 3 port ■ 217 x 123 x 102mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

DESKTOP PC

Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com
Date tested: November 2014



This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.

KEY SPECS
Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

KEYBOARD

Cherry MX-Board 3.0

£55 from www.kikatek.com
Date tested: November 2014



The Cherry MX-Board 3.0 is a hard-wearing mechanical keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It's quiet for a mechanical model but still makes more noise than a standard keyboard. It doesn't have a lot of features, but it's ideal if you're looking for a standard, good-quality keyboard.

KEY SPECS
104 keys ■ 1 x USB port ■ 1.8m detachable cable ■ 2 non-slip surfaces ■ 2 rubber caps for adjustable feet ■ 44.6 x 15.8 x 2.8cm ■ 0.83kg ■ Win-Key lock

NAS DRIVE

Asustor AS-202TE

£199.66 from www.scan.co.uk
Date tested: September 2014



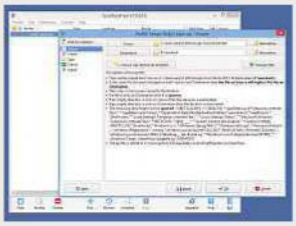
This NAS drive put in an excellent performance in our tests, transferring files over our network faster than any of the other devices we tested. It has an impressive range of tools, including an HDMI output for streaming to TV.

KEY SPECS
EXT4 file system ■ SATA3 hard drive ■ 2 x 3.5in bays ■ 1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet ■ 2 x USB 2 ports, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ 1 x HDMI (1.4a) ■ 1 x 3.5mm mini-jack ■ 230 x 164 x 108mm ■ 1.87kg ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

BACKUP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree



Free from bit.ly/syncback366
Date tested: March 2015

SyncBackFree is very capable software that gives you plenty of control over how it can be used. If you know what you need from your backups and you're prepared to spend some time configuring the options, SyncBackFree has everything you need.

KEY FEATURES

Synchronise: Copy files in both directions ■ Restore back-up files easily ■ Email logs ■ Schedule backups ■ Simple and Advanced mode ■ Runs on Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP ■ Extensive Help documentation and support

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2015



£17.99 from bit.ly/kaspoffer
Date tested: January 2015

Kaspersky Internet Security performed near-perfectly throughout our tests last year, with only one unwanted program slipping through. Our sister title *Computeractive* is selling it at the reader-offer price of £17.99 (full price £39.99). Click the link above.

KEY FEATURES

Anti-virus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ Advanced parental control ■ Licences for one, three and five PCs; for one or two years, or pay monthly ■ Multi-Device version for Mac and Android protection

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: December 2014



With its tidy interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit) ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: December 2014



Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better video-editing software for the price.

KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Burn to DVD and Blu-ray ■ Image stabiliser ■ Stop-motion capture ■ Motion tracking ■ Musical scores and sound effects ■ Upload to YouTube and Vimeo

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com
Date tested: August 2014



Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.

KEY FEATURES

15GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month

ONLINE SITE BUILDER

Weebly

From free from www.weebly.com
Date tested: May 2014



Weebly's drag-and-drop interface makes it extremely easy to use. Its templates are a little restrictive, but there are still plenty of options to choose from and the results look great. It also has free Android and iOS apps.

KEY FEATURES

115 templates ■ Unlimited storage ■ SEO tools ■ Meta tags ■ Password protection ■ E-commerce tools ■ Ad-free Starter edition ■ Android and iOS apps ■ RSS ■ Site stats

Best Free Software

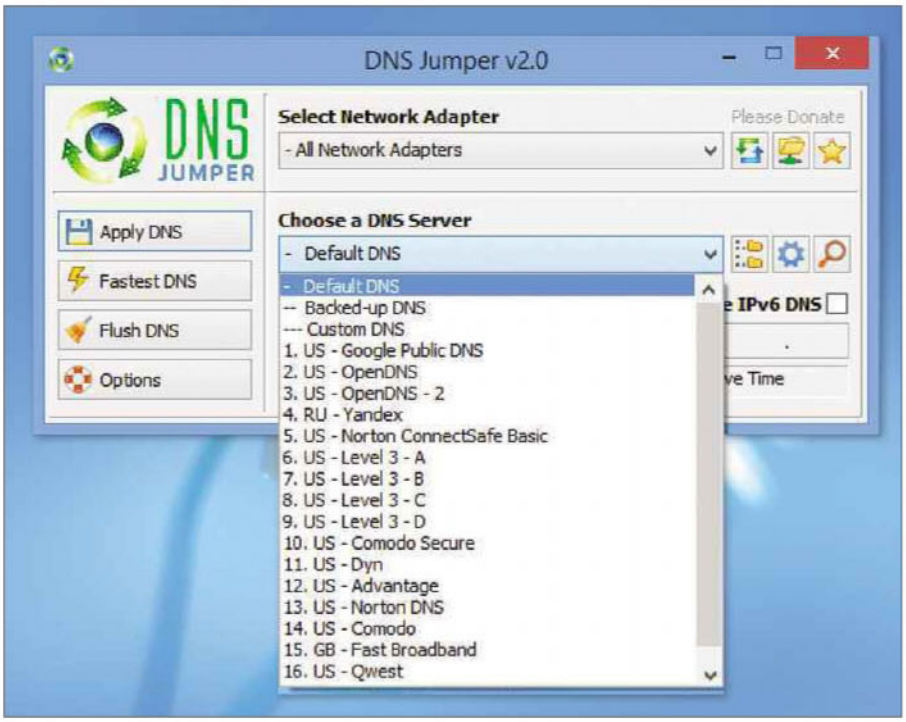
DNS SWITCHER

DNS Jumper 2

bit.ly/dnsjumper376

Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10

File size: 629KB

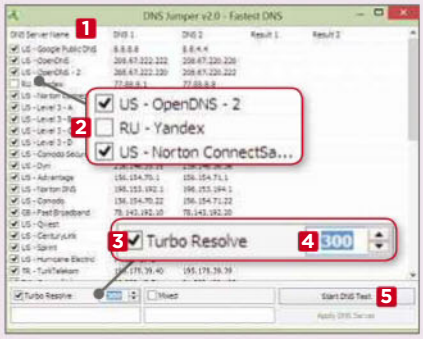


DNS (Domain Name System) is used to translate site names into IP addresses so that they can be understood by web servers and internet routers. When you type a website name into the address bar, your browser has to ask the DNS server for the IP address of the required site before it's able to load it. As a result, there is a small, but noticeable, delay before the page appears on screen. You probably use the default DNS server provided by your ISP, but there might be faster options available, and DNS Jumper lets you quickly switch to an alternative DNS server that could shave milliseconds off your lookup time, and speed up your browsing.

The program is tiny and fully portable, so you can store it on a USB memory stick. Just run the tool, choose the DNS server to switch to and click 'Fastest DNS' to find the best choice for your setup. The latest version of DNS Jumper introduces some useful new startup options that allow you to set the program to start alongside Windows, check for the fastest DNS server and switch to it automatically, so you'll always be using the fastest available option. There's also a feature called Turbo Resolve, which can reduce the time it takes to complete the DNS speed test itself. It's disabled by default, but is easily enabled, and makes a noticeable difference to how quickly results appear.

You no longer need to open the program menu to make changes to DNS Jumper, because all its important features can now be accessed via its icon in your System Tray. If you don't see any improvement in your internet speed, you can easily switch back to your previous DNS server.

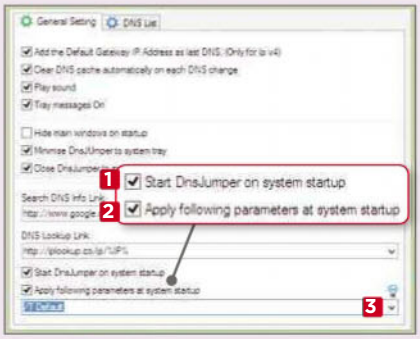
MINI WORKSHOP | Switch to a faster DNS server using DNS Jumper



1 Launch DNS Jumper and click the Fastest DNS button to open a new window listing all of the possible DNS server names. **1** You can deselect any you don't wish to test. **2** Click Turbo Resolve **3** to enable that feature. You can change the round-trip delay time **4** but the default is probably fine. Click 'Start DNS Test'. **5**

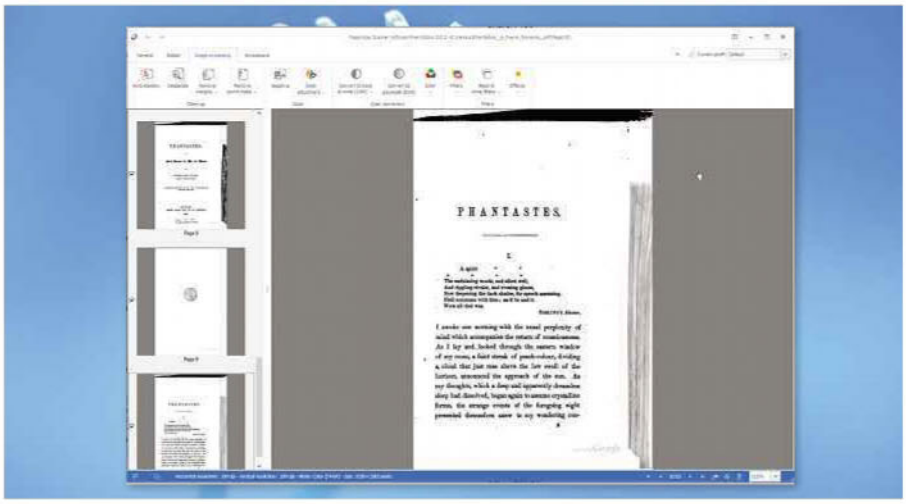


2 You can stop the DNS test at any time. The best results will appear on top **1** and will be automatically selected. **2** Click 'Apply DNS Server' **3** to switch to that option. You can run the test again to make sure the results are consistent. It will be worth doing this at different times throughout the day.



3 To access the new startup choices, click the Options button and select Settings. Tick 'Start DnsJumper on system startup' **1** and 'Apply following parameters at system startup'. **2** In the drop-down box, **3** you can choose the DNS server to use. Select '/T Default' to run the test and apply the top result.

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE



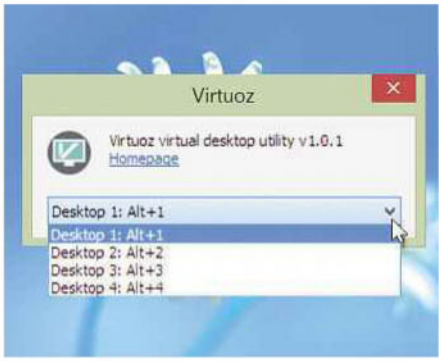
OCR SOFTWARE

PaperScan 3

www.orpalis.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10 **File size:** 20.8MB

PaperScan lets you clean up scanned files and save them as images or PDF files. It can straighten crooked pages, adjust colours, clear noise, remove punch holes and borders, and resize a scan. The latest free version has an improved user interface, and additional filters and effects, but it has some limitations, such as only being able to scan or import a maximum of 10 pages at a time.



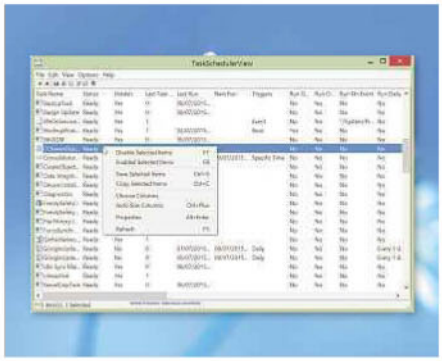
SYSTEM TOOL

Virtuoz

rammichael.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10 **File size:** 343KB

Windows 10 comes with a built-in virtual desktops feature, but you don't need to upgrade to the new operating system to get it. Virtuoz is a tiny program that lets you manage anything from two to 20 virtual workspaces. You can switch between each Desktop using the drop-down menu or its assigned hotkey. The exact number of Desktops on offer can be set by editing the INI file in Notepad.



SYSTEM TOOL

TaskSchedulerView

www.nirsoft.net

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10 **File size:** 71.5KB

This tiny tool displays all the scheduled tasks on your PC and lets you easily disable or enable them. You can sort the list by task name, status (disabled, queued, ready or running), visibility (whether it's hidden or not) and frequency; hide disabled tasks; and choose the actions to apply via a right-click context menu. Double-clicking an item brings up all the information you need to know about it.

New Windows Apps

CSR Racing

bit.ly/csrracing376

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 377MB

This exciting drag-racing game takes place on the streets of a city. It features over 85 licensed cars and impressive graphics. You can even take on your friends in multiplayer races.



Eurosport

bit.ly/eurosport376

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 2MB

The revamped official Eurosport app gives you access to sports news, features, scores and reviews. More than 150 news stories are added daily, covering all the major sports.



Toonia Colorbook

bit.ly/toonia376

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 19.2MB

This fun colouring book for toddlers and pre-school children offers 128 pages for colouring and works with both keyboard-and-mouse and touch-based systems.

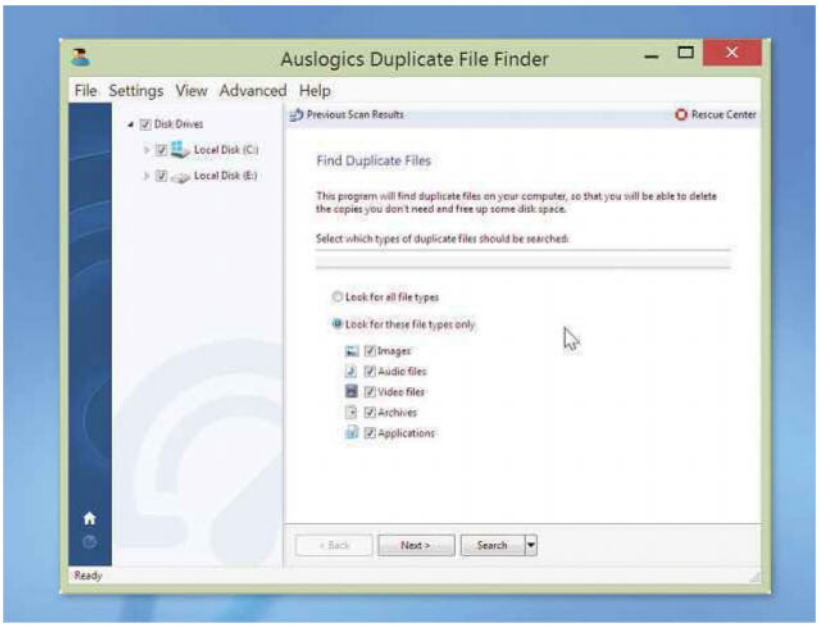


DUPLICATE FINDER

Auslogics Duplicate File Finder 5

www.auslogics.com

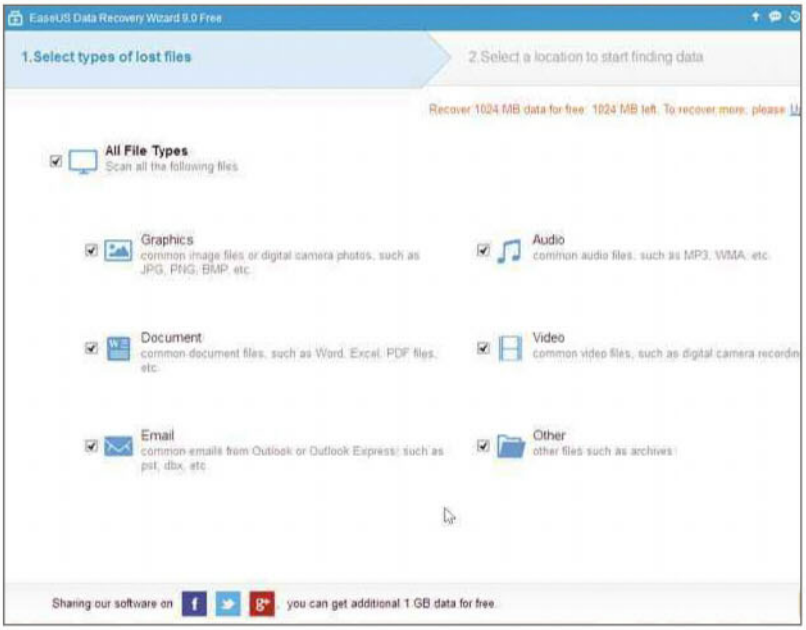
Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10
File size: 7.2MB



You probably have several duplicate files scattered around your hard drive(s) – copies of digital photos or music tracks, for example. Duplicate File Finder can track down and remove these clones, freeing up space on your hard drive. Simply choose a drive, select the type of files to look for (images, audio files, videos, archives or applications) and click Search.

This new version of Duplicate File Finder fixes all known bugs, improves program stability and reliability, and enhances the internal libraries.

During installation, make sure to select the Custom option and deselect BoostSpeed and any other unwanted extras that are set by default to install alongside Duplicate File Finder.



DATA RESCUE

Easeus Data Recovery Wizard Free 9

bit.ly/datarecovery376

Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10
File size: 12.2MB

If you delete a file by accident, there's a good chance you'll be able to recover it, provided you haven't overwritten the data. Easeus Data Recovery Wizard Free can rescue deleted content on hard drives, USB drives, memory cards, digital cameras, mobile phones and other storage media. You can filter searches by file name, type and date, to help narrow down the results.

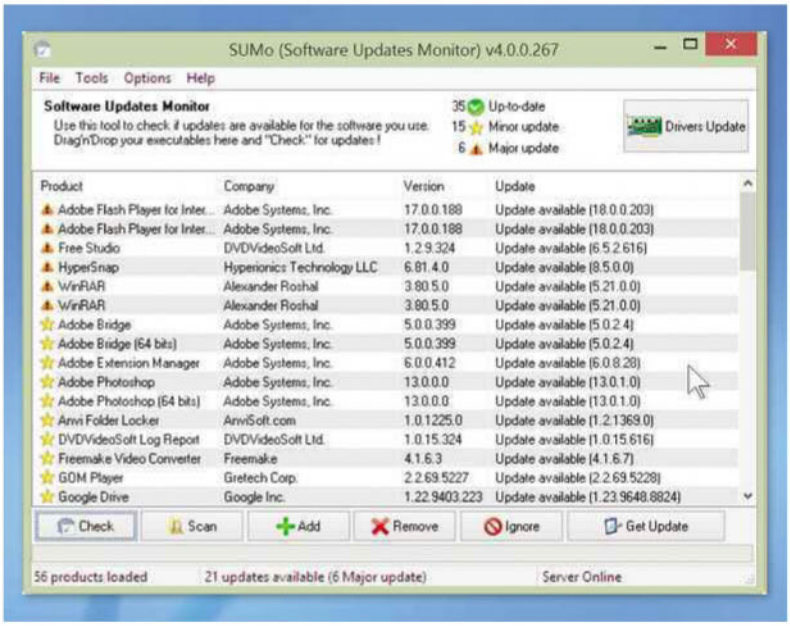
The latest version of the software can recover data from the Mac OS HFS+ file system under Windows, and also improves RAW file recovery. The free edition limits you to rescuing 1GB of data and you'll need to decline any unwanted offers during installation.

PROGRAM UPDATER

SUMo 4

www.kcsoftwares.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10
File size: 1.5MB



Although many programs can now check for updates automatically, this feature isn't always enabled by default, and in some cases isn't offered at all. SUMo (Software Update Monitor) checks whether you're running the latest versions of your favourite software, and lets you quickly update older applications if not. You can customise where on your hard drive the program searches, making it possible to check for updates to portable apps. You can also set up custom include/exclude filters.

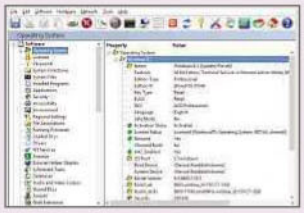
As is increasingly the case with free software, the standard installer comes bundled with some unwanted extras, so make sure you download the clean Sumo Lite version (the third option under the Download and Details buttons).

✗ Don't install...

SIW

www.gtopala.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/8+/10
File size: 5.1MB

SIW (System Information for Windows) accurately describes itself as an advanced tool for telling you "everything you need to know about your computer, but were afraid to ask". The trouble is that it's too advanced, and much of the information will mean very little to most home users. It also costs $19.99 (£13), plus $9.99 (£6.45) for annual maintenance.

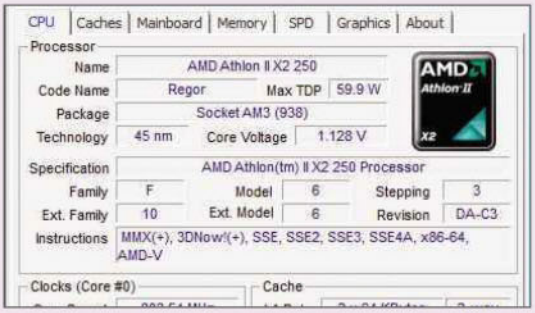


...Install this instead ✓

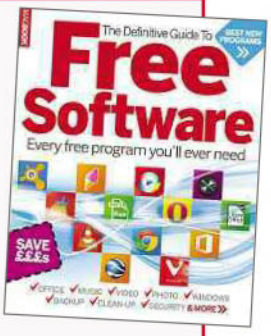
CPU-Z

www.cpuid.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/8+/10
File size: 1.6MB

If you want to find out what's inside your PC, there's no free tool that will tell you faster than CPU-Z. Simply run the program, then switch between its tabs to view detailed information about your processor, motherboard, memory, graphics card and more. It's useful if you're planning to upgrade a specific component and want to make sure you buy the right type, and we like the way you can generate a report of all CPU-Z's data to save and print. Equally good is sister program HWMonitor, which lets you check fan speeds and hardware temperature.



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- Clean your PC to make it run as fast as new
- Tweak your browser to unlock hidden features
- Record free music and video from any website

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UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



DISC-WRITING SOFTWARE

BurnAware Free 8.3

www.burnaware.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10
File size: 8MB

BurnAware Free can write to all types of optical disc, (including Blu-ray); make and burn image files; and erase rewritable discs. It now also supports lower-case characters in ISO file names and improves the burning process and how it handles files and folders.

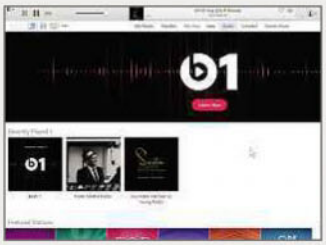


SYSTEM TOOL

Windows Repair 3.2.4

www.tweaking.com
Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10
File size: 12.3MB

Windows Repair can help you fix problems with a misbehaving PC. The latest version adds an option to reboot into Windows Safe Mode from within the program. This option also applies the default Safe Mode Registry keys beforehand, in case a virus has removed them.



MUSIC MANAGER

Apple iTunes 12.2

www.apple.com/uk/itunes
Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10 or Mac OS X
File size: 145MB

Apple's popular music player and organiser has been updated to include the new Apple Music service. As well as streaming songs, albums and playlists, iTunes now lets you tune into radio stations, including Apple's Beats 1. You can find out more about this addition in our Workshop on page 52.



IMAGE EDITOR

Pixelitor 3.1.3

pixelitor.sourceforge.net
Min requirements: Windows XP/7/8+/10
File size: 2.3MB

Pixelitor is a powerful, Java-based image editor packed with features and over 80 photo filters and colour adjustments. In the new release, layers now have thumbnail images, and there's a transparent file option in the Shapes tool. There's also a new 'Enlarge canvas' menu. ■

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Best New Browser Tools

CHROME

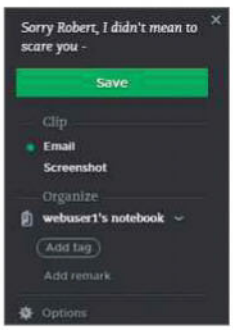
Count down the days until your holiday

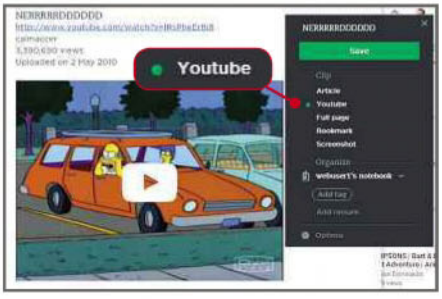
You probably know the date you're heading off on holiday, but it's helpful to be reminded of how much time you have left to get ready for your trip. HolidayFeeling Countdown (bit.ly/holiday376) is a new Chrome add-on from the Post Office that displays the numbers of days remaining on your New Tab page. Just click the cog icon to select the date on the calendar and begin the holiday countdown. Not only that, but the extension also lets you specify the language of your destination, so you can learn useful holiday phrases such as 'What time is it?', 'Do you speak English?' and, of course, 'Where is the Post Office?'. The add-on displays clouds and planes floating across an attractive sky-blue background, and the accompanying website (holidayfeeling.postofficeholiday.co.uk) gives you lots of other helpful advice for your holiday.



Save even more web content using Evernote

Evernote Web Clipper (evernote.com/webclipper) has long been one of our favourite tools for saving content from the web for later, and the updated Chrome extension makes it even more useful. You can now save Gmail messages, including attachments, to your Evernote account and choose whether to 'clip' the whole conversation thread or just the emails from the other person. Other handy new features include saving clutter-free videos from YouTube, product details from Amazon and profile information from LinkedIn, complete with annotations and highlights. As always with Evernote, it's easy to share the content you clip without leaving the page you're currently browsing.





Replace bad words with 'awesome'

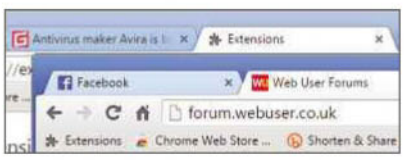
There are several Chrome extensions that make browsing the web more pleasant by substituting words and names you don't like – such as 'millenial', 'UKIP' or 'Kardashian' – for others you prefer. The latest example is an add-on inspired by and named after the song 'Everything is Awesome' from *The Lego Movie*, which finds and replaces negative words and swearwords on web pages with the word 'awesome'. Once installed from bit.ly/awesome376, it starts working automatically and you'll soon find rainbow-coloured instances of awesomeness brightening your browser. When we tested it, Everything is Awesome made 67 substitutions on the Mail Online homepage alone. Awesome!





Move multiple tabs in one go

You probably know that you can 'tear off' a Chrome tab into a new window by dragging and dropping it with your mouse, but what if you want to move more than one tab at once? The answer is very simple, although it's kept curiously quiet by Google: just hold down the Shift key, click adjacent tabs to select them (they'll 'glow' to show they're selected), then drag the lot to tear them off into a new window. Alternatively, you can move non-adjacent tabs to another window by pressing Ctrl before you click and drag them. If you're using a Mac, hold down Cmd rather than Ctrl to select multiple tabs.



This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more

FIREFOX

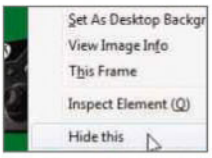
Adjust your privacy preferences more easily



Firefox stores many of your privacy settings in its rather baffling 'about:config' section, so you don't tweak them unnecessarily but, if you've got a hankering for tampering, you can install Privacy Settings (bit.ly/privacy376). This useful add-on lets you access and alter all your privacy preferences in one place. These include Safe Browsing (which scans downloads for malware), Tracking Protection (which stops advertisers following you around the web) and Geo-location (which lets websites see where you're browsing from). You can either turn settings on and off individually, or use the Full Privacy or Protect Privacy & Security buttons to apply default preferences. Hover your mouse over a setting to see a tooltip explanation of how it protects your privacy.

Hide annoying adverts by right-clicking them

Rather than blocking all online ads and depriving websites of revenue, you can use the punningly named Firefox add-on Hide Adverse-tisements (bit.ly/adverse376) to only block the most annoying and offensive adverts, such as those featuring women in suggestive poses. Just right-click the ad and choose 'Hide this' to browse the rest of the page without distraction (reloading the page restores the ads). It's a simple but useful tool, although it doesn't work on Flash adverts, and the next version will (anonymously) notify advertisers when you block their ads, so they realise their techniques are causing irritation.



Move useful Firefox features to one panel

LastPage (bit.ly/lastpage376) lets you access many of the most useful Firefox features in a resizable panel at the bottom of the window, rather than spread across several menus. These include your Bookmarks folder, History and Add-ons Manager; Firefox's 'about:config' settings; and the Session Restore page that lets you recover closed tabs and windows. To move between these different features, click the View menu and select the relevant option from the new LastPage sub-menu.



Opt out of McAfee when installing Flash

It's essential to use the latest version of Flash Player to combat security flaws but, annoyingly, the download (from get.adobe.com/flashplayer) comes with an 'optional' pre-ticked offer for McAfee Security Scan Plus.

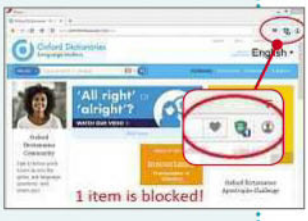


It's easy to untick this, but even easier to forget to do so, which is where McAfee Auto Opt Out (bit.ly/mcafee376) comes in handy. As its name suggests, this add-on automatically opts you out of the bundled McAfee extra when you install a Flash Player update from the Adobe site, to save you the hassle of removing it afterwards.

OTHER BROWSERS

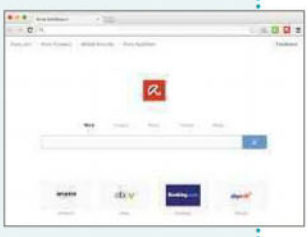
Block social widgets on web pages

Social-media widgets such as Facebook's ubiquitous Like button are among the nosiest parkers on the web, tracking the sites you visit and the links you click, so they can target you with adverts. The new Opera add-on Social Disconnect Plus (bit.ly/social376) lets you shake them off your trail by blocking social content from more than 20 companies, including Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and eBay. You can turn the extension on and off with a single click, and usefully see how many social trackers it has blocked since you activated it. The developer also promises that by using the add-on, pages will load 25 per cent faster.



Try Avira's secure new browser

Security company Avira already offers Chrome add-ons called Safe Search and Browser Safety, and it's now designed its own secure browser. Based on Chromium, which means it looks a lot like Chrome, Avira Browser integrates the company's existing tools and additional protection technologies to cover the many different threats we face when using the web. The browser, which will be available for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux, is currently in beta. To test it, you'll need to apply to Avira at bit.ly/avira376.



Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

MUSIC

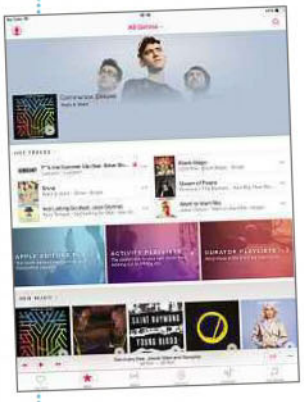
Apple Music

NEW

apple.com/uk/music

Min requirements: iOS 8.4

We cover the Desktop version of Apple Music in this issue's Workshop 1 (see page 52), but Apple's new streaming service can also be accessed via the Music app on your iPhone or iPad, once you've installed iOS 8.4. Unlike Spotify, there is no free streaming option (except for listening to its Beats 1 radio station), but you'll be automatically enrolled in a three-month free trial after choosing either the individual or family membership (which cost £9.99 and £14.99 a month respectively thereafter).

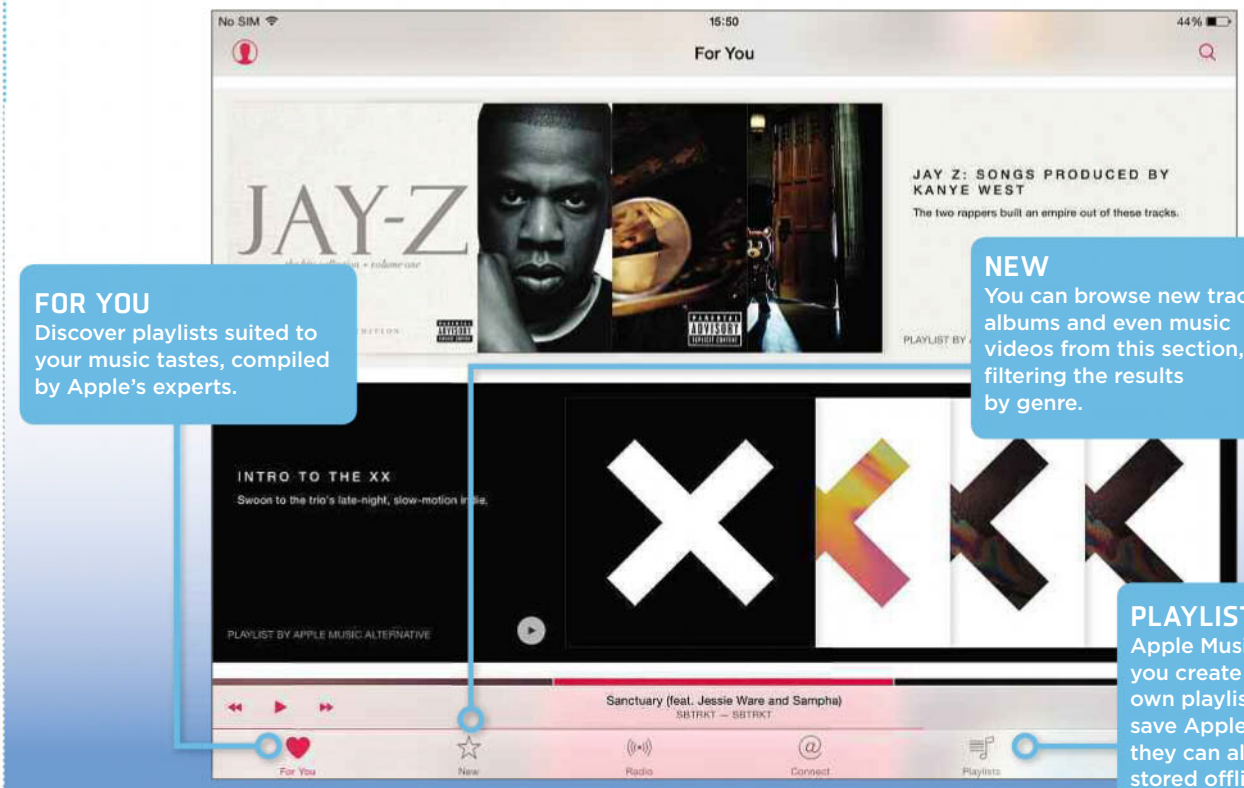


Perhaps our favourite thing about Apple Music is its For You discovery feature. The first time you launch the app, you'll be asked to indicate your music tastes by tapping a selection of genres and artists you like. Based on this, Apple Music then suggests albums and playlists (which are compiled by music experts rather than computers) for you to listen to. By tapping the 'love' icon on the albums and tracks you like most, you can help improve the quality of Apple Music's recommendations even further.



We were really impressed by Apple's live radio station, Beats 1, which is advert-free and hosted by three regular DJs including Zane Lowe, as well as special guests such as Elton John and Dr Dre. The variety of music is better than anything you'll find on your local radio stations and you can launch the station by simply telling Siri to "play Beats 1".

Elsewhere, however, Music doesn't yet feel like the finished article. Its basic Share option pales in comparison to Spotify's more advanced social features and, unusually for Apple, the interface often feels slightly over-complicated. If you don't already pay to stream music, it's well worth using Apple Music's three-month free trial, but otherwise you might be best off waiting to see how the service develops before jumping ship.



FOR YOU
Discover playlists suited to your music tastes, compiled by Apple's experts.

NEW
You can browse new tracks, albums and even music videos from this section, filtering the results by genre.

PLAYLISTS
Apple Music lets you create your own playlists (or save Apple's) and they can also be stored offline.

Our rating ★★★★☆

This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps for Android, iOS and Windows phones and tablets, and smart TVs

SHOPPING

UPDATED

Pounce

pounce.mobi

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 27.2MB



There are loads of great price-comparison shopping sites, but what if you don't know the name of the item you want to buy? Pounce solves this problem by letting you use your device's camera to capture the object of your desire, so that it can identify it for you or suggest a range of alternatives at reasonable prices. Once you've found something you like, Pounce's Buy It Now feature lets you purchase the item from the app and it'll be dispatched directly from the retailer. Recently added suppliers include H&M and Urban Outfitters.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

FILE MANAGEMENT

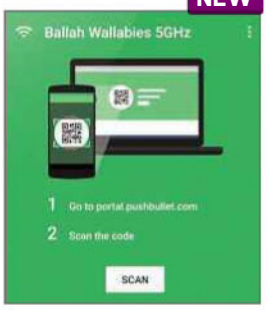
NEW

Portal

portal.pushbullet.com

Min requirements: Android 4.4

Size: 3.9MB



New from Pushbullet, Portal lets you wirelessly transfer files between your Android device and PC. Once the app is installed and both devices are connected to the same network, simply visit portal.pushbullet.com on your PC and scan the QR code using Portal. You can then begin transferring photos, videos and other files simply by dragging and dropping them. Since the app uses Wi-Fi, transfers are much quicker than using Bluetooth or moving files via a cloud service such as Dropbox or Google Drive. Because there are no cables, you can move around freely, too.

Our rating ★★★★★

FOOD

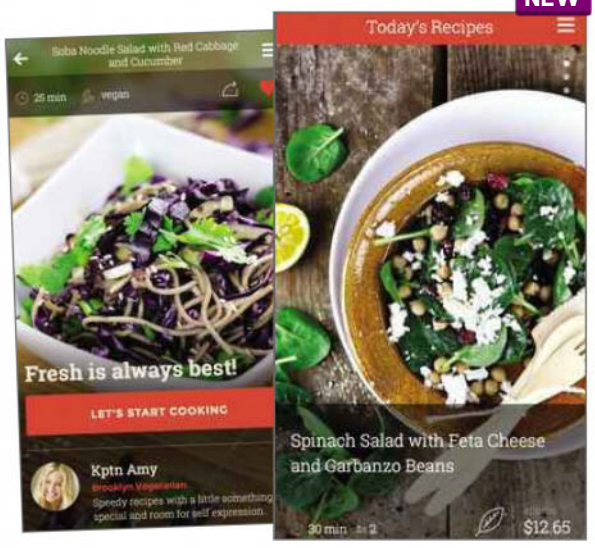
NEW

KptnCook

bit.ly/kptn376

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 8.7MB



When you're hungry but you're not sure what to eat, inspiration can be hard to find. This app targets your taste buds with a small daily selection of recipes that it says take no longer than 30 minutes to cook. You get three suggestions at a time, all of which disappear after 24 hours to be replaced by three more. But if you like what you see (and eat), you can click a heart icon to save them. There's no option to narrow the suggestions based on your likes and dislikes, but the selections tend to be varied and it's all about discovery. The recipes are also easy to follow, broken down into simple steps complete with images and a full list of ingredients. The app is tailored for people living in the US and Germany but don't let that put you off: there's still plenty to satisfy hungry Brits!

Our rating ★★★★☆

ROUND UP | Quick bites

Easy Uninstaller

bit.ly/easy376

Min requirements: Android (varies with device)

Size: Varies with device



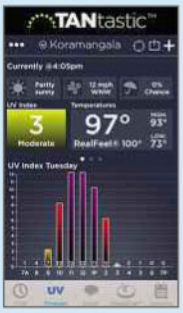
Easy Uninstaller helps you make space on your Android device by uninstalling multiple apps at once. Note that the app can only uninstall apps that you've downloaded and not those that came pre-installed on your phone or tablet.

Tantastic UV

bit.ly/tantastic376

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 13.9MB



Whether you're a sun worshipper or you want to avoid its harmful rays when they're at their most powerful, Tantastic UV gives you an hour-by-hour UV forecast so you can plan your time outside.

Instagram

bit.ly/instagram376

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 7, Windows Phone 8

Size: Varies with device



Instragram's standard image resolution has been boosted to 1,080 x 1,080 pixels. However, the change is only on iOS and Android for now, and not for Windows Phone users.

PRICE COMPARISON

Snapt

UPDATED



bit.ly/snapt376

Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 7

Size: 4.1MB

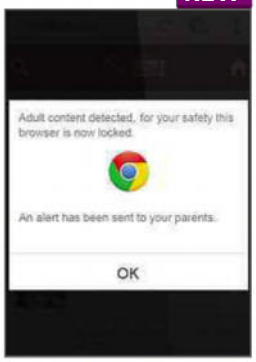
Since June 30 2015, it has been compulsory for energy suppliers to include a QR code on your bill to make it easier for you to find the best deals available. New from Comparethemarket.com, Snapt uses this technology to give you a quote based on information attached to the QR code, such as your energy consumption and annual bill period dates. Because the code contains the specifics of your current rates, the app can tell you exactly how much you can save based on your real energy use. Comparethemarket.com says on average its customers save £273 a year, so there's every chance you could end up making big savings by switching energy supplier.

Our rating ★★★★★

TOOL

Wordkik Child

NEW



bit.ly/wordkik376

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3

Size: 9.3MB

WordKik Child helps prevent your children from seeing adult content on their phone or tablet. The app blocks all adult websites on your child's device and can also detect the use of bad words in any app. Before installing it on your child's device, you first need to download WordKik Parental Control (bit.ly/wordkikparent376) for your own phone or tablet. Once you've set up a profile for a child, you'll be notified when they try to view a blocked site or use bad words, and their browser will be blocked until you choose to unlock it. The app can also be used to block specific apps but to do this remotely, you'll need to upgrade to the premium version.

Our rating ★★★★☆

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

Fragment



bit.ly/fragment376

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3, iOS 7

Size: 6.8MB

Price: £1.61

Fragment is a photo-editing tool which (in the words of its developers) lets you "transform any image into totally unique, one-of-a-kind prismatic art". It offers a range of frames, shapes and patterns to choose from, all of which turn your image into unique prism-like pieces.

GAME

Her Story



bit.ly/herstory376

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 1.76GB

Price: £3.99

Her Story is a murder mystery game that requires you to piece together a sequence of events by searching a police database of video clips showing interviews with a woman who is being questioned about her missing husband.

MUSIC

DM1 – The Drum Machine



bit.ly/drum376

Min requirements: iOS 7.1

Size: 94.9MB

Price: £3.99

DM1 turns your iPad into an advanced but easy-to-use drum machine, letting you experiment with 99 electronic drum kits to produce tracks that can be exported directly to SoundCloud, Dropbox or Facebook.

MUSIC

Crayola DJ



bit.ly/crayola376

Min requirements: Android 4.0, iOS 7.1

Size: 59MB

Price: £3.79

This app encourages children to explore their musical side, letting them mix more than 100 loops from different musical genres. The app lets them save their creations and play them back to friends and family.

PRODUCTIVITY

Nine



bit.ly/nine376

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 9.9MB

Price: 79p

Nine is a visual to-do list that lets you capture a visual reference of things you want to remember using your device's camera, and then organise them by adding tags such as 'do', 'go', 'buy' or 'listen'.

Fragment | Her Story | DM1 – The Drum Machine | Crayola DJ | Nine

Best New TV Apps

SPORT

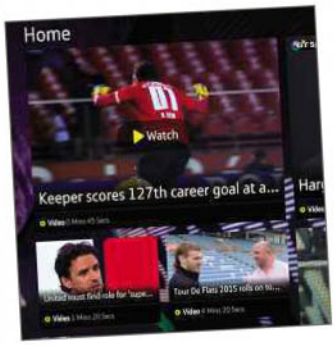
BT Sport Lite

bit.ly/btsport376

Min requirements: BT broadband, Android 4.1, iOS

Size: 22MB

BT is about to increase the price of its BT Sport Pack, but you can still enjoy at least some of the service for free via BT Sport Lite. This only lets you watch the BT Sport 1 channel, but since this screens 38 live Premier League football matches, 69 Premiership rugby games and many international friendlies, it's hardly a poor deal if you don't mind watching in Standard Definition. What's more, the BT Sport app for Android and iOS lets you stream channels to your TV, so you only need to be a BT broadband customer rather than a BT TV subscriber. BT Sport Lite is included with all BT broadband deals; just make sure you decline the offer for the full BT Sport Pack when you sign up, or ask to downgrade from your current package to Lite.



TV

BBC iPlayer

bit.ly/iplayerandroid376

bit.ly/iplayerios376

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 7, Windows Phone 8 (not updated)

Size: 24MB



Last issue, we were critical of the ITV Player and Demand 5 mobile apps, and there's no denying that the BBC pays more attention to its catch-up service than rival broadcasters. The latest update to its Android and iOS apps improves the way you browse programmes from the last 30 days by bringing everything together in one place. Just tap or swipe Menu to explore shows by channel or category; access your Favourites and Downloads; and view the TV Guide. This design tweak makes the app less fiddly to use, and the BBC has also fixed a problem in the Android app that prevented shows from being streamed to the Chromecast when you were watching them live.

SPORT

BBC Sport

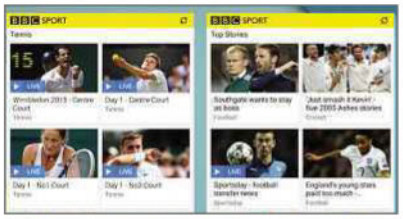
bit.ly/bbcsportandroid376

bit.ly/bbcsportios376

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 6, Windows Phone 8 (not updated)

Size: 13.3MB

We know it's another sport app *and* another BBC app, but you can't beat the Beeb for free (well, licence fee-funded), live cricket coverage. With The Ashes now well underway, the updated BBC Sport offers the ideal way to follow the Third, Fourth and Fifth Tests on your phone or tablet. You can't watch the action, but the app provides ball-by-ball coverage and lets you tune into live commentary on Radio 4 Long Wave or Radio 5 Live Sports Extra. The Android version has been updated to open pages from the BBC Sport website within the app rather than your mobile browser, while the iOS app offers new alerts to ensure you don't miss a wicket.



✗ Don't install...

Temperature

bit.ly/temperature376

Considering that weather apps such as BBC Weather tell you the current temperature for free, this one has some cheek to charge you 99p just to tell you how hot it is within three miles of where you are. What's more, it's very poor at detecting your location and only updates every 30 minutes. It's barely worth a penny let alone nearly a quid, and we're not surprised it's been received coldly by other users.



...Install this instead ✓

Smart Thermometer

bit.ly/smart376

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 1.8MB



Most phones have a sensor that monitors their internal temperature but, aside from the Samsung Galaxy S4, very few have a built-in thermometer for measuring the temperature around you. Smart Thermometer works with both types of device, providing accurate ambient readings for phones that have a sensor and figures from your nearest weather station for those that don't. The temperature is provided in Celsius (you can switch to Fahrenheit if you prefer), along with readings for humidity and pressure, against an attractive, colourful background. When you don't have the app open, the current temperature is shown in your notification area.

WINDOWS 10 THE TRUTH

COVER FEATURE

Don't believe the hype! **Wayne Williams** reveals why Windows 10 might not be the all-conquering operating system that we've been waiting for – at least not just yet

Microsoft has released its fair share of bad operating systems over the years: Windows Me, for example, infuriated users with its frequent crashes, while Windows Vista introduced the universally loathed User Account Control. But even by those standards, Windows 8 was a mess, and it'll come as no surprise to anyone who used it in its first year that it's the software giant's least successful operating system ever.

Thanks to two major updates, Windows 8.1 (as it became) is a much better OS, but even so, many of us can't wait to ditch it for the new Windows 10, which promises to bring together the best bits of Windows 7 and 8.1, with some welcome new features thrown in for good measure.

But are we being over-optimistic to hope that Windows 10 will set the PC world to rights? Has Microsoft been too hasty in choosing a summer release when many testers have deemed the OS "buggy" and "unstable"?

In this Windows 10 special, we cut through the hype to reveal the truth about what Microsoft isn't telling you about its latest OS, and explain why it might be more sensible to hold back on upgrading until all the early problems have been ironed out. We also look at some of the worst mistakes made by Microsoft when launching previous versions of Windows, and why experience suggests that it may be foolish to rush in where wiser PC users hesitate to tread.

WHAT MICROSOFT ISN'T TELLING YOU



When Microsoft announced Windows 10 last September, it said the OS would be free to Windows 7 and Windows 8 users during its first year of availability, leaving people to wonder what that actually meant. There was talk of "Windows as a service" – so did that mean Microsoft would be charging a yearly subscription for it, like it does for Office 365? Eventually it was clarified that this would be "more than a one-time upgrade: once a Windows device is upgraded to Windows 10, we will continue to keep it current for the supported lifetime of the device – at no additional charge".

However, that then begs the question – what exactly does "supported lifetime of the device" mean? It was initially believed to be a period from two to four years but, just before we went to press, Microsoft revealed that it would be supporting the new OS for 10 years – the same length of time as previous versions of Windows. Mainstream Windows 10 support starts on 29 July 2015 (launch day) and runs for five years until 13 October 2020. Beyond this date, Microsoft won't add features to Windows 10. The OS then enters the five-year Extended Support phase, which ends on 14 October 2025. This is the more important date because that's when Microsoft will stop updating Windows 10 with security fixes.



However, the newly updated Windows lifecycle fact sheet (bit.ly/lifecycle376) has some accompanying small print that says ongoing support is all dependent on devices remaining compatible.

"A device may not be able to receive updates if the device hardware is incompatible, lacking current drivers, or otherwise outside of the Original Equipment Manufacturer's ("OEM") support period," the text reads.

So the question remains: will you have to replace ageing hardware in order to guarantee receiving future updates? That small print suggests you might. And now that Windows is a regularly updated service, will Microsoft release new "baseline" versions of Windows 10 (such as Windows 10.1) every few years and, if so, will the 10-year life cycle be updated accordingly?

In essence, then, at the time of writing, we still don't know how long Microsoft will continue to support Windows 10, as it is launching, with feature upgrades and security patches.

More troubling is Microsoft's announcement that updates will be mandatory. Windows 10 Home users will have no say at all in which updates are installed and when, and while Windows 10 Pro users will be able to defer updates for up to eight months, they won't be able to veto them entirely.

Microsoft says this is in the interests of improved security, but if you've ever had to disable Windows Update to stop it messing up your PC, you'll know that updates sometimes impede, rather than improve, the performance and security of your system. It's rumoured that Microsoft will cut off security patches to users who block updates using third-party software, potentially making them vulnerable to malware.



Only Windows 10 Pro business users will be able to stop updates completely, and thus sidestep problematic ones, but us hapless Home users won't have that privilege. This means that if Microsoft decides to make major changes to elements of the operating system, including bundling additional unwanted content (games like Candy Crush Saga, for example), you'll have no choice but to accept these changes. Maybe you'll be able to uninstall such additions, maybe you won't.

But the biggest question that remains unanswered about Windows 10 is how much it will cost to buy after the first year. Microsoft has yet to announce UK pricing for Windows 10 at the time of writing, but the Get Windows 10 app

shows the price for Windows 10 Home as £99.99 (crossed out, with "free" next to it). Underneath, it says this is just the "estimated retail price of Windows 10 Home full license, actual prices may vary", which leaves the door open for the price to go up before July 2016.

We're also concerned that Microsoft has barely mentioned the fact that once you've upgraded to Windows 10, you have only 30 days to roll back – or 'downgrade' – to your current Windows OS if you decide you don't like the new one. See our 'Downgrade from Windows 10' section on page 42 for more about this catch.



Finally, although it's less likely to be a potential deal-breaker than some of the other unanswered questions we've covered, it remains unclear how much input Windows Insiders have had on the shape and direction of Windows 10. Microsoft says there are more than five million Windows Insiders, but while we know bugs and other problems have been remedied thanks to feedback from Insiders, we wonder how much (if any) user contribution has been involved in Windows 10's design and functionality. After all, it's hard to imagine that the majority of users were keen to retain the tiled Start menu in favour of one that's more akin to the standard Windows 7 design.

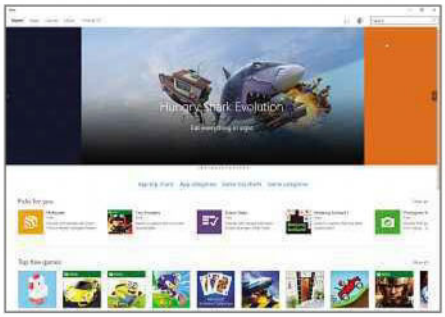
THE PROS AND CONS OF NOT UPGRADING

Microsoft obviously wants Windows users to upgrade to Windows 10 as soon as it's released and is offering you hard-to-resist incentives, such as making it free for a whole year after its release. But that doesn't mean you should grab the new OS straight away. With a full 365 days to upgrade, you can wait until the very last day (presumably, 28 July 2016) if you so wish. Or you can stick with your current operating system and not upgrade at all – you're under no obligation to switch to the new offering.



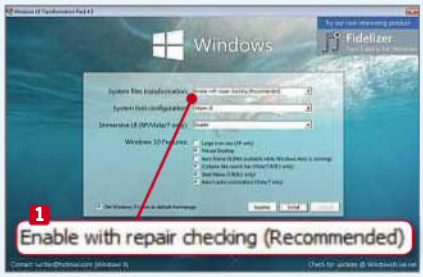
The biggest disadvantage in choosing to wait is the risk of missing out on the free upgrade offer altogether and having to pay for your Windows 10 licence, which will cost at least £99.99. If you try to side-step this by getting the OS for free from sources other than Microsoft, there's the danger of getting a dodgy copy and not being able to download upgrades.

Another downside to not upgrading is that you won't be able to install Windows 10 apps. Although Windows 8.1 is short of amazing apps, that could change with Windows 10 because Microsoft has made it much easier for developers to 'port' Android and iOS apps over to the new operating system.

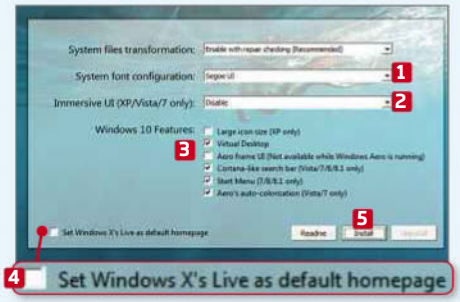


That said, it's inevitable that the OS will remain a work in progress for a long time after its release. Microsoft has rushed Windows 10 out of the gate, and even if it's relatively stable and free of

MINI WORKSHOP | Get Windows 10's best features in Windows 7 or 8.1



1 You can get many of Windows 10's new features – such as virtual Desktops – in older versions of the OS by installing third-party programs. The easiest way is to install the Windows 10 Transformation Pack (www.windowsxlive.net). Run it, and make sure 'Enable with repair checking (Recommended)' is selected. 1



2 Select a system font 1 and, optionally, the Immersive UI feature (Metro). 2 Choose which Windows 10 features you require. 3 It's worth including the Virtual Desktop, Cortana-style search bar and Start menu. Untick the homepage change 4 and click the Install button. 5

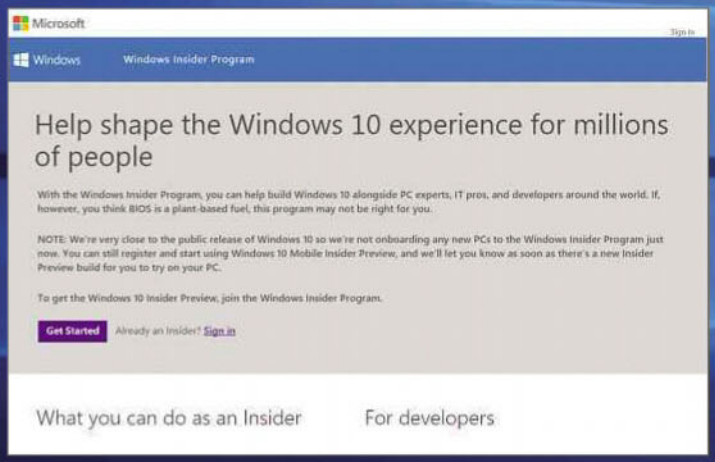


3 Once installed, you can play around with the new features such as the new Start menu, 1 File Explorer, 2 and virtual Desktops. 3 If you want to go back to the standard look, just uninstall the pack through the installer. The website mentioned in Step 1 has a dedicated uninstaller, should you run into problems.

WINDOWS 10 USER OR WINDOWS INSIDER?

Microsoft is offering Windows 10 users a choice. From 29 July, you can either upgrade to the RTM (Release to Manufacturing) build of the operating system, which is essentially the "finished" stable version, or you can join upwards of five million or so Windows Insiders testing preview builds of the OS.

Standard Windows 10 users will require a valid Windows 7/8+ or 10 licence, through which the operating system will be 'activated', as with all previous iterations of Windows. However, Windows Insiders won't require a valid licence, making it a good option for Windows XP or Vista users who aren't eligible to upgrade for free. Insiders are offered new builds to test as they become available, with each build only lasting for a set time before expiring. Provided you keep updating to the latest builds, you'll be able to keep using the OS for free. Insiders can choose to be on the Fast or Slow ring – those on the Fast ring will receive new cutting-edge (and therefore likely buggy) builds, while Slow ring Insiders will be able to upgrade to more stable releases but on a less frequent release schedule. The chief benefit of being a Windows Insider, aside from not requiring a Windows 10 licence, is that you'll be the first to try out new features and changes. The downside is you'll be running a far less stable operating system that will likely crash more regularly, and cause you lots more problems.



bugs, it will still require a lot of updates to fix all the problems that didn't come to light during the Insider Preview testing stage.

Microsoft plans to push Windows 10 to an estimated one billion devices, but so far it has only been tested by around five million Windows Insiders, many of whom won't have reported the problems they've encountered. You can expect Microsoft to be rolling out a ton of updates for at least the first three months or so following Windows 10's official launch, and your best bet is to stick with a stable operating system until these glitches are ironed out and Windows 10 is truly ready for use.



If you're currently running an older version of Windows, such as XP or Vista, you don't have the option to upgrade directly, and you'll need to carry out a fresh Windows 10 install from scratch. This means backing up everything beforehand and either purchasing a valid licence or joining the Windows Insider program and risking buggy versions of the OS instead. All the more reason to not commit yourself until the OS is stable, or you could end up paying even more in the long run.

Although Windows 10 looks promising, you can get many of its features on Windows 7 and 8.1 right now without the risk of losing your personal files during an upgrade, and without losing the functionality you currently enjoy with your existing operating system. See our Mini Workshop on the previous page to find out how.



We also wouldn't be surprised if the new Edge browser, which currently only works with Windows 10, eventually makes it onto Windows 8.1 – in the same way that Internet Explorer 10 was released for Windows 7 six months after it launched with Windows 8.

Furthermore, while Windows 10 is a huge improvement over Windows 8.1, it looks quite similar, and much of what was unpopular about the tiled OS has been retained. Many users detested the Modern (Metro) interface, but Windows 10 still uses the same tiles, albeit in a Start menu rather than a Start screen.

Windows apps, too, remain a major feature of the OS, even though the apps are generally nowhere near as powerful as standard Windows programs – or "legacy apps", as Microsoft annoyingly insists on referring to them.

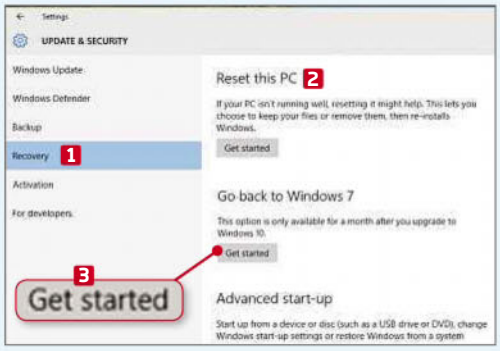


MINI WORKSHOP

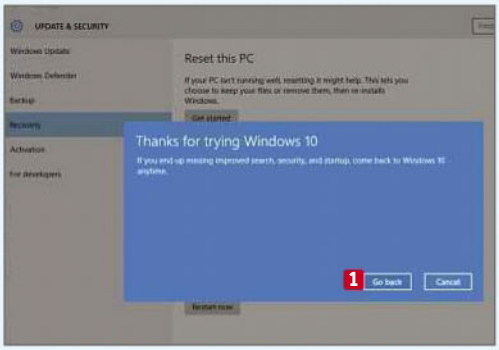
How to downgrade from Windows 10 to Windows 7



1 Provided you've upgraded to Windows 10 as an in-place update (and not a custom install), rolling things back is quite simple and is carried out directly inside Windows. Click the Start button and go to Settings. 1 Click the Update & Security section 2 in the window that opens.



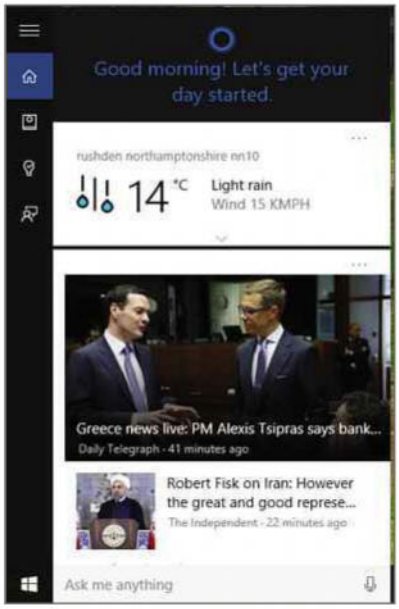
2 Click Recovery 1 in the left-hand pane. You'll see several options, including the ability to 'Reset this PC'. 2 More importantly, underneath this should be the option to go back to Windows 7 (or Windows 8.1, if that's where you upgraded from). Click the 'Get Started' button. 3 You'll be asked why you want to take this action.



3 Answer the question, or skip it, and click Next. You'll be warned that any changes made to Windows 10 since upgrading will be lost, but your personal files should be safe. Click your way through the following screens, until you get to the 'Thanks for trying Windows 10' screen. Click 'Go back' 1 and the uninstall process will begin.

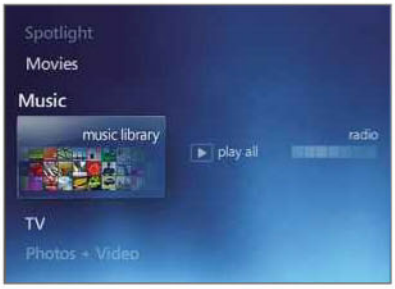
FEATURES YOU'LL LOSE IN WINDOWS 10

Although Windows 10 offers numerous new features, such as the integration of Microsoft's personal assistant Cortana, multiple Desktops and a modern command prompt, it also. removes several popular tools found in previous versions of Windows. It's a classic case of giving with one hand, and taking with the other.



Without doubt, the biggest feature to be lost in Windows 10 is Windows Media Center. Microsoft has canned the program "due to decreased usage", according to Windows Insider chief Gabriel Aul, and won't even offer it as an optional free download. If you regularly use Media Center, you'll either have to find a free alternative, such as Kodi (kodi.tv), which won our Gold Award in Issue 372, or stick with your existing Windows OS. The moment you install Windows 10, Media Center will be gone. As compensation, Windows 10 offers a free DVD-playback app, but that's hardly the same thing and it lacks most of the useful features offered by Media Center.

If you currently use Desktop gadgets in Windows 7, prepare to say goodbye to them in Windows 10, and to familiar Windows games such as Solitaire, Minesweeper and Hearts. You'll be able to find and download new editions of the first two games in the app store, but they won't come pre-installed.



If you like to manage your own Windows updates, you'd better hope you're eligible for Windows 10 Pro (the free upgrade entitles you to the closest version of Windows 10 that your current OS corresponds to), because the Home version doesn't let you defer updates. The update process in Windows 10 Home is entirely automatic, with updates installed as soon as they become available, whether you like it or not.

Worst of all, some of your existing programs and apps might not work in Windows 10, and you won't know which ones until you try running them in the new OS. Microsoft says that Windows 10 "should work with the same devices and programs that work with Windows 8.1, but you might need to update or reinstall some of them", which doesn't exactly fill us with confidence!



WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU UPGRADE

If you decide to upgrade to Windows 10, there are a few things you need to do before clicking the Install button. First, make sure your PC is up to the task of running the new OS. Windows 7 or 8.1 users shouldn't have any problems, but there's no guarantee everything will work as it should. The official minimum system requirements are:

- **Processor:** 1GHz or faster processor.
- **RAM:** 1GB for 32-bit Windows 10 or 2GB for 64-bit.
- **Hard disk space:** 16GB for 32-bit OS or 20GB for 64-bit OS.
- **Graphics card:** DirectX 9 or later with WDDM 1.0 driver.
- **Display:** 1,024 x 600 pixels.

Assuming your PC is compatible, check that your current version of Windows is up to date, because you can only upgrade if you're running Windows 7 with Service Pack 1 (SP1) or Windows 8.1 with Update 1. If you use an older Windows OS, like XP, you'll need to do a fresh install, and your existing OS will be completely wiped from your hard drive.

The Get Windows 10 app, which Microsoft has pushed out to Windows 7 and 8.1 users, includes a compatibility checker (this isn't active at the time of writing, but should be from July 29 onwards). Launch the app, click the menu in the upper-left corner and select 'Check your PC'.



Finally, you should back up all your personal data and settings and create a system image in case of problems. You can use the excellent program Macrium Reflect Free (bit.ly/macrium376), which appeared in last issue's Best Free Software, to create the image and restore your system from it.

DOWNGRADE FROM WINDOWS 10



If you decide you don't like Windows 10 after you upgrade to the new operating system, or buy a new PC with the OS pre-installed, it is possible to return to using Windows 7 or 8, provided you make the move within 30 days.

If you upgraded directly to Windows 10 from your old operating system, you can roll things back using the built-in Update & Security settings. Just follow the steps in our Workshop on the opposite page.

If you bought a new PC with Windows 10 pre-installed, this might still work, but it will depend on whether the seller upgraded the device's operating system before you bought it (in which case it will work) or if Windows 10 was the first operating system installed on it (which means it won't).

The simple uninstall method will only work on PCs that have upgraded via the Get Windows 10 app. If you performed a custom install over the top of Windows 7 or later, you will need to install the older OS from scratch, which will wipe your personal data. The same applies if you upgraded Windows XP or Vista to Windows 10, so again, you'll lose any personal content and programs.

Either way, before attempting to revert from Windows 10 to an older OS, you should back up all your personal files and settings, just in case something goes wrong. See the Mini Workshop on the opposite page for instructions on how to downgrade from Windows 10 quickly and safely.

What you say...

We asked *Web User* readers what worries them most about upgrading to Windows 10. Here's what you told us:

What is the situation regarding older Flash-based apps and browser games. Will they still work in Windows 10?

Bedstor

I am using Windows 8.1 with a recovery partition on the main drive. Will upgrading remove this or will it be retained so I can roll back to Windows 8.1, if so desired?

rogerman40

I don't need Edge, I'm quite happy with Chrome. I've no microphone and have no wish to talk to my laptop, so I don't need Cortana. I like the look of Windows 7, which I also understand, and I'm concerned that software such as Encyclopedia Britannica will not work if I upgrade. So why do I need Windows 10?

FratPark

Microsoft has done it again – added unnecessary features just because it can. I understand someone with limited dexterity using voice operation, but nobody else. It's just wasted technology. I used enough of my bandwidth downloading Windows 8.1 and 8.1.1, so I won't be using three weeks' allowance to download Windows 10.

Mikec1

My concerns are that old versions of Office, such as 2000, may not work on Window 10, and my old printers won't have W10 drivers available.

Peru

I've got used to Windows 8/8.1, but now I'll no longer be able to type a request anywhere on the Start page, as I currently can, for example typing N to bring up a link to Notepad. But my biggest concern is recovering the system should it fail to boot. What happens to the PC manufacturer's recovery partitions and drivers? It seems to me that they are useless once Windows 10 is installed.

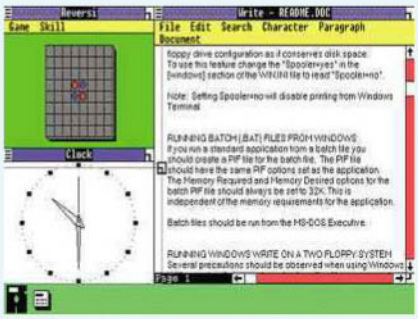
Joe_London

Windows Timeline

Since 1985, there have been more than 40 iterations of Windows. Here are our highlights.

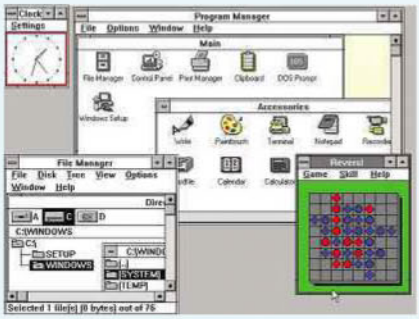
Windows 1.0

A basic, black and white interface, which arrived on a single 5.25in floppy disk and included a strategy game called Reversi.



Windows 3.0

Microsoft's first big win, thanks to a better interface, memory management and support for text-mode DOS programs.



Windows NT

More stable and more secure, with an emphasis on networking.

Windows 95

The first consumer-friendly version of Windows, it introduced the Start button, taskbar, Windows Explorer and a startup sound.



Windows 98

A more modern interface, featuring improved hardware support and built-in Internet Explorer and Outlook Express.

Windows Me

Specifically designed for home use with a few internal tweaks to improve speed – but it's really just a stopgap.

MICROSOFT'S BIGGEST WINDOWS BLUNDERS

Windows 10 will be the widest-ever release of an OS, but Microsoft has 30 years of experience at botching launches, as **Rob Beattie** recalls

Precarious presentations

It's a technological truth that if something can go wrong during a new product demonstration, it probably will – often because of highly complex software that's ready to be promoted but isn't quite ready for use.

Even so, a YouTube search for "Windows product demonstration fail" uncovers some pure comedy gold. This includes Vista producing a Blue Screen of Death during a public demonstration (bit.ly/vistalaunch376), after Windows 98 had done exactly the same thing during a live demo by Bill Gates himself (bit.ly/98launch376).

But nothing can prepare you for the humiliation of seeing Mr Microsoft sink deeper and deeper into one of Conan O'Brien's comfy chairs as he tries in vain to get a peep out of Windows XP Media Center Edition (bit.ly/medialaunch376).

So what awaits us with Windows 10? On this evidence, quite possibly a repeat of that classic Microsoft catchphrase: "The great thing about.... whoa!".



Design disasters

Windows Vista cluttered our screens with unnecessary bits of electronic furniture, such as the pointless Sidebar and its range of largely redundant gadgets. It also introduced the processor-sapping Aero interface with its glass effects and pointless Flip 3D task-switching.

However, nothing can compare with the way Windows 8 stank up the place. By hiding the Start menu and Desktop, and unleashing the bizarre tile-based Modern (Metro) interface and disappearing/reappearing Charms bar, both of which are fine on a touchscreen but hopeless with a keyboard and mouse, Microsoft lost in a stroke any kudos it had accumulated for the widely admired Windows 7.



Fortunately, one of the highlights of Windows 10 is that it partly brings back the Windows 7 interface, while retaining the better aspects of Windows 8.1.

However, the company's worst blunder of all is still Microsoft Bob, the preposterous interface for home PCs that reimagined (we use the word loosely) the Desktop as a series of cartoon rooms where real objects, such as notebooks and calendars, represented programs. Sadly, there was no way to throw the entire interface onto the roaring fire in the study. Bob is also responsible for introducing the world's most loathed typeface, Comic Sans. It says a lot that many tech journalists described Windows 8 as "the worst thing since Microsoft Bob".



Terrible technology

Imagine having to ask permission every time you wanted to put something away in a kitchen cupboard, change channels on the TV or go to the toilet. That was the kind of user "experience" delivered by Windows Vista and its irritatingly

nannyish User Account Control (UAC), which made computing doubts and anxieties part of daily life. Hilariously – in retrospect, at least – a product manager at Microsoft once claimed that the aggressive UAC built into Vista was deliberately designed to "annoy users" in a wrong-headed attempt to improve how both they and software companies behaved. "We needed to change the ecosystem and we needed a heavy hammer to do it," he said, echoing what many of us felt like doing to Vista.

Meanwhile, Windows Me was such a confusing and pointless release that no-one even knew how to pronounce its name (Me? Em Ee?) or whether it stood for Millennium Edition or Multimedia Edition; *PC World* magazine probably came closest to clearing things up by calling it the "Mistake Edition".



Even Windows XP, loved and lamented long after Microsoft turned off its life support, arrived dragging a dog called Internet Explorer 6 with it. This appalling, bug-ridden browser single-handedly held back web development for the five miserable years of its active product life; and even longer for the many poor people who were forced to keep using it at work. Here's hoping the new Edge browser proves safer, faster and more reliable.



Awful adverts

Microsoft has managed to produce some cringingly bad adverts. Steve Ballmer set the bar low right from the start with his used-car salesperson-style tirade in praise of Windows 1.0's "advanced operating environment" (bit.ly/ballmer376. This dreadful promo has since been explained as a prank for internal consumption only, but it's knuckle-gnawingly bad, either way. As is the extraordinary piece of nonsense (bit.ly/windows386376) used to promote Windows 386, which starts as a *Mission Impossible* spoof before descending into a Cyndi Lauper-style pop video singalong – "W-W-Windows 386!".



More recently, there was the bizarre ad campaign that tried to encourage people to host their own Windows 7 launch parties (bit.ly/windows7launch376). It featured a group of unconvincing actors standing around in an equally wooden kitchen, imparting advice such as "part of the fun of a launch party is seeing what you already know". Yeah, thanks for that.

However, our favourite (because we're of a certain age) is a promotional video in which Chandler and Rachel from *Friends* teach you how to use Windows 95 (bit.ly/friends376), which – in the words of one viewer – "gets worse the farther you watch".



Windows XP

The first 100-per-cent Windows success. Intuitive and attractive, with excellent hardware support, it sold more than one billion copies.



Windows Vista

Overblown and interface-heavy, with a widely hated tool called User Account Control and ineffective family 'safety' features.

Windows 7

Still the one to beat, it muffled User Account Control, boosted performance and is still the most agile of all Windows releases.

Windows 8/8.1

A muddled combination of Desktop and tablet interfaces that many users find baffling; 8.1 reinstated the Start button sharpish.



Windows 10

We like the virtual Desktops, Cortana and Edge but can Microsoft produce a single, unified Windows that works well across devices?

NEXT ISSUE on sale Wednesday 12 August 2015

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PLUS...

WINDOWS 10 REVIEW
Does the final version of the OS demolish all our doubts?

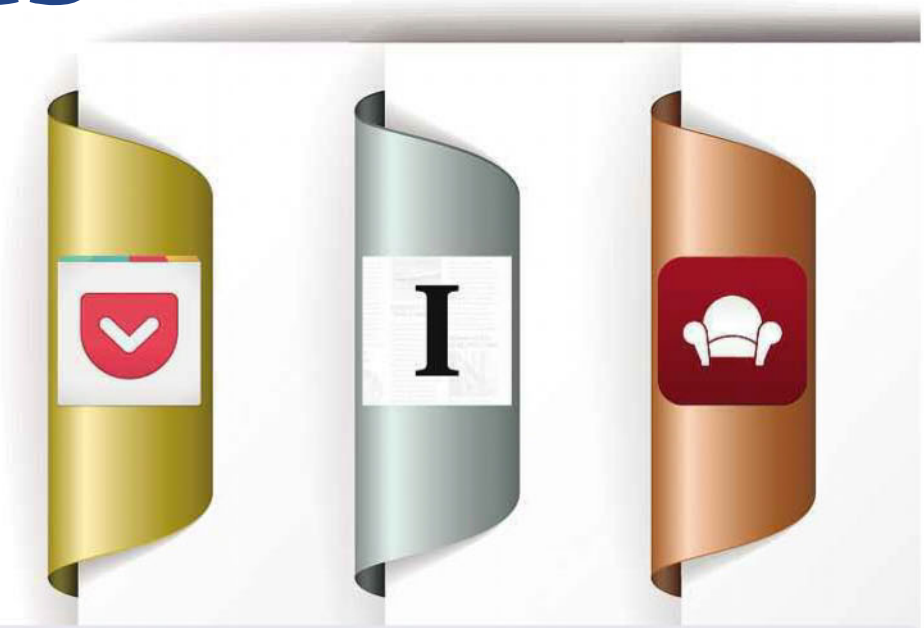
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Best *read-it-later* services

You don't always have time to read a long article as soon as you find it on the web. **Andy Shaw** tests six read-it-later tools to see which is best for keeping your saved articles accessible and organised



Pocket | getpocket.com | ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser GOLD AWARD

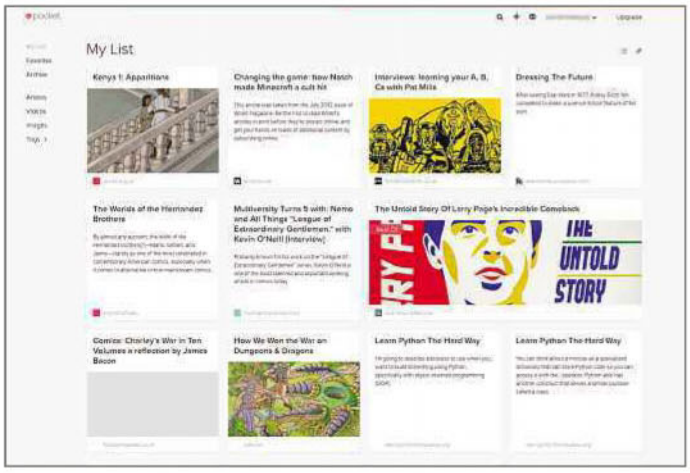
What we liked:

Pocket was the original read-it-later service (it was even called Read It Later when it was first launched) and, in our opinion, it's still the best. Every aspect of it is just that little bit better than the competition and, although there's a paid-for version, the free service is all that most people will need.

It's very easy to add articles, videos and web pages to Pocket: there are browser add-ons for all the main browsers (it's preinstalled on Firefox now, whether you like it or not); you can send articles to it by email; and it's well integrated into hundreds of other apps and services including Twitter and Feedly. To save a page in your browser, you simply click the add-on's icon. This saves the page and, unlike the other services we've reviewed here, lets you add tags straight away, so you can file and organise your reading as you go.

Once you've saved an item to Pocket, you can use its own apps to view your saved stuff anywhere, either via the website or through the apps. These are available for phones and tablets running Android or iOS, and Kobo ebook devices.

All the apps let you choose between articles, videos and images, but you can also view by tag, which is handy when you want to catch up on a particular topic. Your saved articles are represented by thumbnail images, which makes the interface look more inviting and interesting than our other award-winning services.



When you view an article, you're presented with a stripped-back version of the web page, so your reading isn't distracted by clutter. Images are included but all the surrounding web furniture is removed, which makes pages very clear to read, though it isn't conducive to exploring more of the site the article is from.

How it can be improved:

You don't get everything in the free version. Premium Pocket costs £3.99 per month (or £34.99 for a year) and has a handful of extras, including a better search tool, automatic tag suggestions and a cloud-based archive that lets you read your articles even after they've disappeared from the web.

OUR VERDICT

Pocket is one of the oldest read-it-later services and its maturity stands it in good stead. It provides plenty of different ways to save your articles, and lets you organise them with tags as you go. It also works well with lots of other tools.

Instapaper | www.instapaper.com | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆



What we liked:

As with Pocket, saving articles in Instapaper creates an easy-to-read version of a web page, stripping away unnecessary extras such as ads and navigation. This pared-back design follows through into the main Instapaper interface, which eschews Pocket's fancy thumbnails and instead displays each of your saved articles with a simple headline and opening sentence or two. It's certainly clean, but it's a bit bland.

There are sparks of brilliance here, though, such as the Speed Read tool, which flashes up articles word by word, saving you the bother of scanning your eyes across the page and forcing you to read without pausing. You can adjust the speed but we found the default 350 words per minute worked well.

How it can be improved:

Instapaper doesn't have a Firefox extension. You can use the bookmarklet in any browser and, in many ways, this is



probably a better, sleeker option (see our Top Tips for bookmarklets on page 64). You can file articles in folders, but it would be preferable if you could do this as you save them.

OUR VERDICT

Instapaper is all about the words, stripping back everything else from a website to make it exceptionally clear and easy to read. However, this is also carried through to the website and its apps, which leaves everything looking a bit sparse.

Readability | www.readability.com | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆



What we liked:

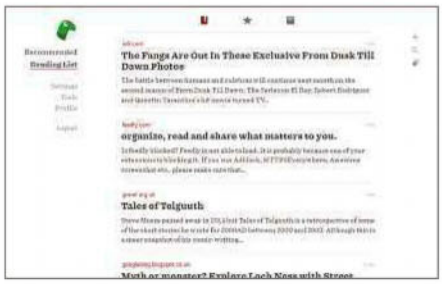
Readability pitches itself primarily as a tool for making websites more readable, though you can still save articles for reading later. This gives it a slightly different angle to Pocket and Instapaper, although all three essentially perform the same tasks – it's just a question of how the services are marketed.

The main difference with Readability is that you can also follow other users. It flags up people who have saved similar articles to you, so you can use them as a source for further reading. However, this Recommended option is higher up the pecking order of the main menu than your own Reading List, which we aren't particularly keen on.

Readability has apps for Android and iOS, and add-ons for all the main browsers. You can also use it to send articles to your Kindle.

How it can be improved:

Readability's browser add-on installs three buttons: Read Now, Read Later



and send to Kindle. This is too many, especially if you don't own a Kindle, and the other two look too similar and can be easily muddled up. You also can't tag articles to organise them from these buttons; instead, you have to go into the apps or the website and do it retrospectively.

OUR VERDICT

Readability is trying too hard to be different, by pushing its social recommendations and clear-reading options above its basic article-saving tool. This makes it a little more cumbersome to use than the other award-winners.

BEST OF THE REST

Framabag

framabag.org

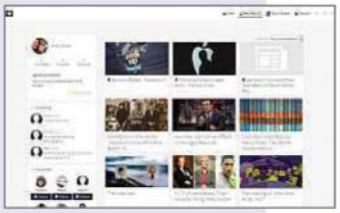
Framabag is a French website but it's bilingual, so everything's written in English alongside or just below the French version. It uses another service called Wallabag to save articles, which it does well enough, but this can get confusing, particularly since you can't use Wallabag without having a Framabag account. It's also a long way from being as slick as our award-winners.



ReadingPack

readingpack.com

ReadingPack is an interesting service but it loses a lot of credibility by only letting you sign in with a Facebook account, rather than giving you the option to register with your email and a password. Its main emphasis is on sharing articles with other people, so while you can use it to save things for reading later, you can also use it to find new, interesting things to read, too.



Evernote Clearly

evernote.com/clearly

This browser add-on for Evernote cleans up web pages for easier reading and, because Evernote is designed to save things you want to look at later, it can also be used to save articles. However, since it converts pages to Clearly first, before you can save them, it turns what should be a single-click process into two clicks. Evernote is great for storing notes and clippings but it's over-complicated if all you want to do is save things to read later.



Transfer any file to any device

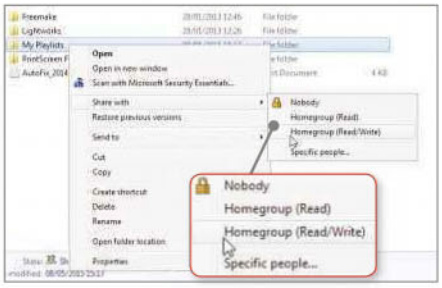
Want to copy a file to or from your PC without having to faff about with USB drives? **Jonathan Parkyn** explains the easiest, fastest ways to transfer files between your devices

Windows to Windows

Emailing yourself files or using a USB memory stick is fine for the occasional transfer, but if you often need to move files between Windows PCs, then setting up a shared folder is the smartest option. First, make sure all the PCs are connected to the same network and belong to the same HomeGroup. To do this, click Start, type `homegroup` and click the HomeGroup option on each PC to either create or join a HomeGroup as required. Certain libraries are shared among HomeGroup PCs by default, including Music, Pictures and Videos, and you can also add specific folders.

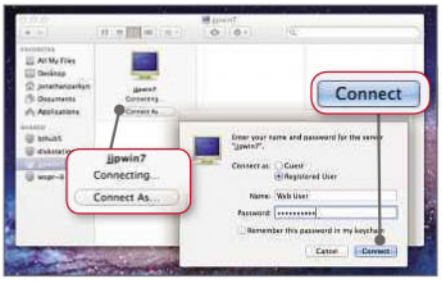
Navigate to the folder you want to share, then right-click it and select 'Share with', then choose 'HomeGroup (Read/Write)' – or, if you're using Windows 8, 'HomeGroup (view and edit)'. To access the folder from another PC, open an Explorer window, click your HomeGroup on the left and browse for the folder on the remote PC.

If you're transferring files between PCs that aren't on the same network, see the 'Transfer any file to any platform' box, opposite.



Windows to Mac OS X

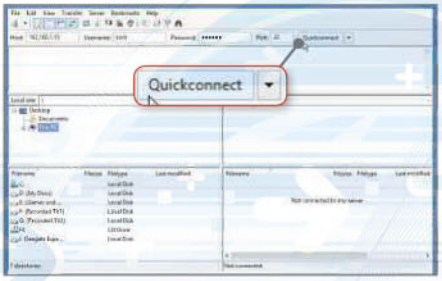
You can use shared folders to transfer files between Macs and Windows PCs over a network, too. On the Windows PC, right-click the network icon in the Notification Area and select 'Network and Sharing Center', then click 'Change advanced settings' and make sure Network Discovery and File Sharing are both turned on. Tick the 'Use user accounts and passwords' option under 'HomeGroup connections', then navigate to the folder you want to share on your PC. Right-click it and select Properties, then click the Sharing tab and click Advanced Sharing. Tick the 'Share this folder' box and click Permissions, then tick Allow for all options and click OK three times.



On your Mac, open Finder. You should see your Windows PC's name under Shared on the left. Click it, then click Connect As and type your Windows username and password before clicking Connect. You'll see your shared folder, and be able to drag and drop files to transfer them to and from your PC.

Linux to Windows

A quick way to transfer files between a Windows PC and a Linux (Ubuntu, for example) computer is to use FTP. On the Ubuntu computer, open the Terminal and type `sudo apt-get install openssh-server` then press Enter. On your Windows PC, install FileZilla (bit.ly/filezilla376) and run it. In the Host box, type your Linux computer's IP address. Enter your Linux login details in the Username and Password boxes and enter 22 under Port, then click Quickconnect. You should now be able to browse your Linux PC from your Windows computer and transfer files back and forth between them.



Android to Windows

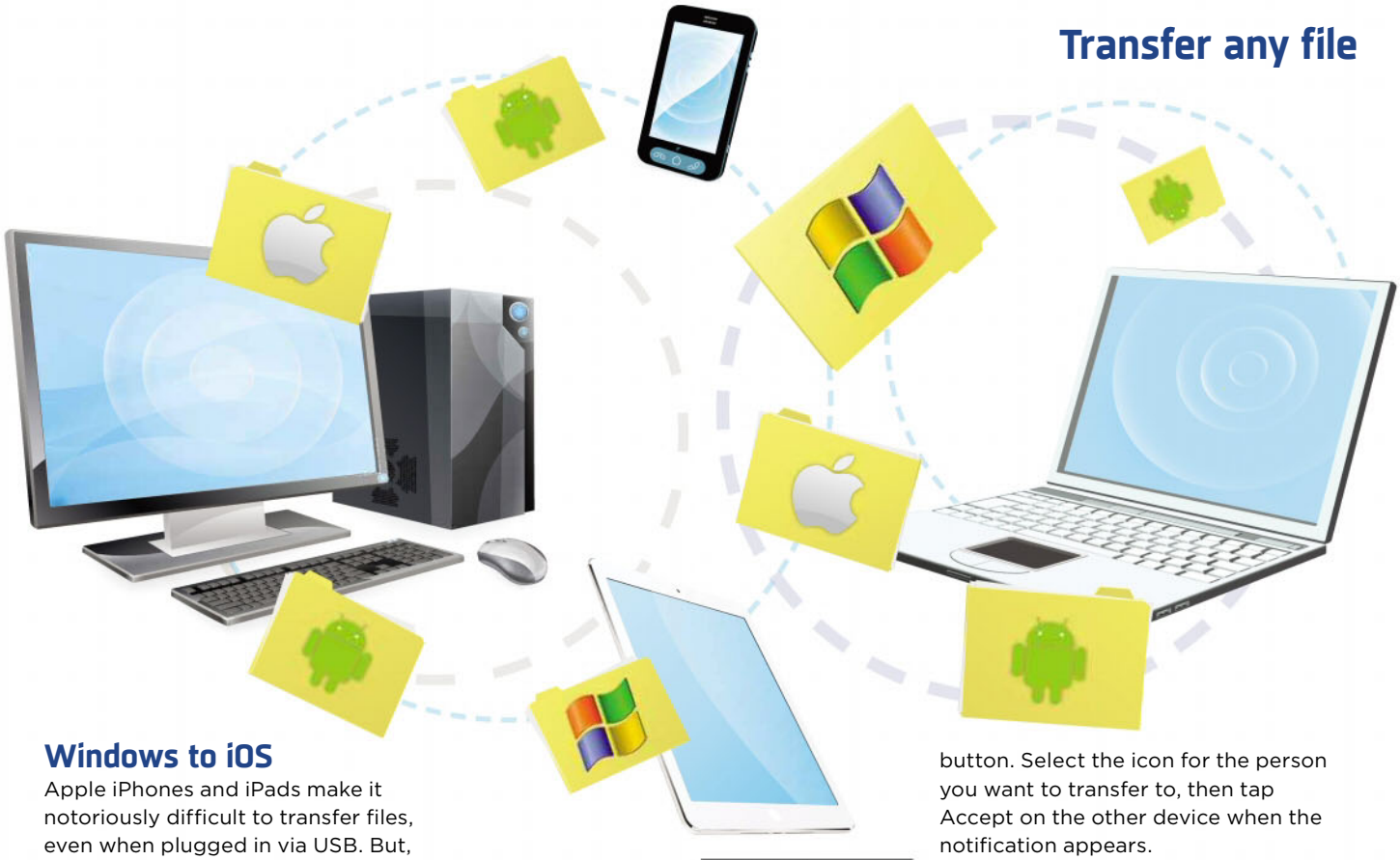
You could just plug your Android device into your PC using USB but these days, let's face it, cables are a hassle. For full wireless transfers between your devices, grab yourself a copy of the free ES File Explorer File Manager app from Google Play (bit.ly/esfile376). Once it's installed, tap the three-line Menu button, then tap Network followed by LAN. Tap New and enter your PC's IP address under Server, along with your Windows login under Username and Password. If you don't know your PC's IP address, you can find this out by clicking Start, typing `cmd` and pressing Enter on your keyboard, then typing `ipconfig` and pressing Enter again – the IP address will be listed under IPv4 Address.

Once you've entered these details in ES File Explorer, an icon for your PC will appear under LAN. From here, you can browse and transfer files from any of your PC's shared folders (see the first two tips for instructions on sharing folders).



To wirelessly access your Android device's files from your PC, tap the menu button in ES File Explorer, then tap Network, Remote Manager and 'Turn on'. You'll see an ftp address. Type this into the address bar of an Explorer window on your PC to access folders on your Android device and transfer files to and from them.

See our Workshop on page 57 for more about ES File Explorer.



Windows to iOS

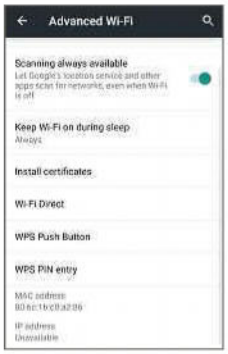
Apple iPhones and iPads make it notoriously difficult to transfer files, even when plugged in via USB. But, thankfully, there's a free way to easily make wireless file transfers without jailbreaking your device.

Install and run FileApp on your iOS device (bit.ly/fileapp376). Tap File Sharing and switch on Sharing. You'll see a username and password, which you can change to anything you want. Underneath, you'll see an IP address. On your PC, open a browser and type the IP address into the address bar, then press Enter. When prompted, enter the username and password shown in FileApp. Now you can drag and drop files into the browser window or click 'Upload files' and browse your PC. The files you transfer can be found in the Downloads folder under FileApp's 'Files and Folders'.



Android to Android or iOS to iOS

You can transfer files between two Android devices via Bluetooth, but it's slow and unreliable. Instead, you could use Wi-Fi Direct, which is much faster and more stable. Most recent Android devices have Wi-Fi Direct built in. On your first device, tap Settings, Wi-Fi, Menu (the three-dots icon), Advanced, then Wi-Fi Direct. Tap the device listed under 'Peer devices' to send an invitation, then tap Accept on your other device. Use ES File Explorer File Manager (see opposite) to locate the file you want, then long tap it and tap Send. Now select the other Android device and tap Send. For devices without Wi-Fi Direct built-in, try using a third-party app, such as SuperBeam (free, bit.ly/superbeam376)



Similarly, you can use AirDrop to transfer between newer iOS devices such as the iPhone 5 and 4th generation iPad. Swipe the Control Center up from the bottom of the screen on both devices and tap AirDrop to turn it on, then locate your file and tap the Share button. Select the icon for the person you want to transfer to, then tap Accept on the other device when the notification appears.

Android to iOS

To transfer files between any mobile devices – however old and whatever OS they are running – try the free app Feem Lite (bit.ly/feemdroid376 for Android, bit.ly/feemios376 for iOS). The two devices have to be connected to the same Wi-Fi network or hotspot. Install and open the app on both devices, then browse one device for a file you want to send, select it and tap Share. The other device will appear as a destination – tap it to send the file which, once transferred, will appear in Feem's Camera, Music or Files folder (depending on the type of file) on the destination device.



TRANSFER ANY FILE TO ANY PLATFORM

If you want the freedom to transfer files between any devices, regardless of the operating system they run, a number of options are available. The obvious route is to use a cloud-storage service, such as Dropbox, Google Drive or OneDrive. Any files saved here can be accessed from any device once you've logged in with your account. Large files (up to 2GB) can be transferred over the web for free using the excellent WeTransfer (www.wetransfer.com).

Another great way to move files around is by using Pushbullet. Install the app for your Android (bit.ly/pushdroid376) or iOS (bit.ly/pushios376) device, then get the Chrome (bit.ly/pushchrome376) or Firefox (bit.ly/pushfox376) extension for your PC. You can now 'push' content – including text messages, links, files, maps and more – to specific devices.

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2	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: Broadband	£5.00 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£30.00
3	plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£30.00
4	EE	EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£2.95 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£35.40

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details
*First-year cost does not include line rental. Cost is calculated at monthly price x12 with all introductory offers subtracted. Additional charges incurred outside of free inclusive calls not included in first-year cost. ** Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.
Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 16 July 2015.

Ofcom
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Computer active

Next issue on sale Weds 5 August



SNEAK PREVIEW!

In the next issue of our sister title Computeractive...

- What's secretly killing your PC? How to find out
- Create the perfect password
- Fix PC problems that Microsoft has abandoned
- Discover how other people use your PC behind your back

Take a Screen Break

Technology moves so quickly that it's easy to forget stories from only a few years ago. For our final nostalgia quiz, we want you to think back to **2010**





1 Apple's iPad was undoubtedly the most talked-about gadget of 2010, following its UK launch on 28 May. What was the size of its touchscreen?

2 Which website celebrated passing the milestone of 500-million registered users in July 2010?

3 In April 2010, Steve Jobs wrote a famous memo in which he criticised a specific technology for failing to adjust to the mobile era. What was the subject of his "Thoughts on..." memo?

4 Which company was slated for "accidentally" collecting 600GB of Wi-Fi data in 30 countries around the world?

5 How many websites were there as of December 2010: 25 million, 255 million or 2.5 billion?

6 What's the name of Microsoft's groundbreaking motion-sensing device, which launched for the Xbox 360 in November 2010?

7 How many browsers originally appeared on BrowserChoice.eu, which was launched in 2010 to challenge the dominance of Internet Explorer?



8 To which country did 650,000 web users vote to send Justin Bieber in an online poll held in the summer of 2010?

9 What caused the first-ever World Cup-related trending topic on Twitter on 9 June 2010?

10 What was the real name of the infamous Cat Bin Lady, who dumped a moggy in a wheelie bin and walked away?

11 What was broadband ISP Tiscali rebranded in January 2010, following its takeover by Carphone Warehouse?

12 And the final question for our final nostalgia quiz: how many issues of *Web User* had been published by the end of December 2010?



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE POPULAR VIDEOS FROM 2010?

A



B



C



Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz376

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 6
AVM FRITZ!Box 4020 Wi-Fi router

WORTH £42 EACH



The 4020 is AVM's smallest FRITZ!Box ever. It's the perfect starter kit for your home network and delivers 450Mbps in the 2.4GHz frequency band. It comes with one WAN port, four LAN ports, a NAS function and one USB2.0 port, and supports 3G and 4G dongles for internet access via mobile communication networks. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with '4020' in the subject line. For more info on FRITZ!Box products, visit en.avm.de/fritzbox and follow @AVM_DE.

WIN 1 OF 6
CyberLink YouCam 7 Deluxe

WORTH £36.99 EACH



YouCam 7 delivers the functions of a complete live video studio, to make full use of your webcam. It comes with over 200 fun effects for video chats and recordings. This Deluxe version has new beautifying tools that let you whiten teeth, adjust skin tone and remove eye bags. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'youcam' in the subject line. For more info on CyberLink's software, visit www.cyberlink.com and follow @CyberLink on Twitter.

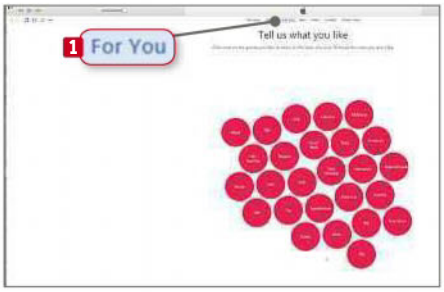
Get started with Apple Music

bit.ly/apple376

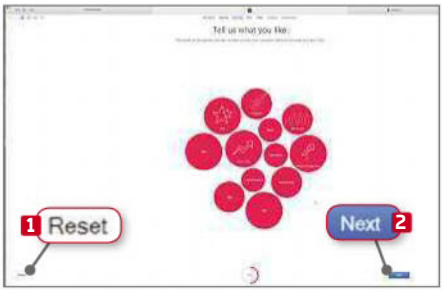
The highly anticipated music-streaming service has arrived. Here's what you need to know

Apple Music is a new streaming service that's available on iPhone, iPad and iPod touch, as well as PC and Mac (via iTunes). Unlike other streaming services, there's no free tier – it costs £9.99 a month for a single membership, or £14.99 a month for families. There is, however, a free three-month trial available. You will be automatically signed up for the auto-renewal payment option, and charged once the trial is over. To opt out of this, open iTunes and click the Account icon at the top. Select 'Account info', then log in and click Manage, which is next to Subscriptions under Settings. Click Off, next to Automatic Renewal. You can also opt out through an iOS device via Settings, iTunes & App Store.

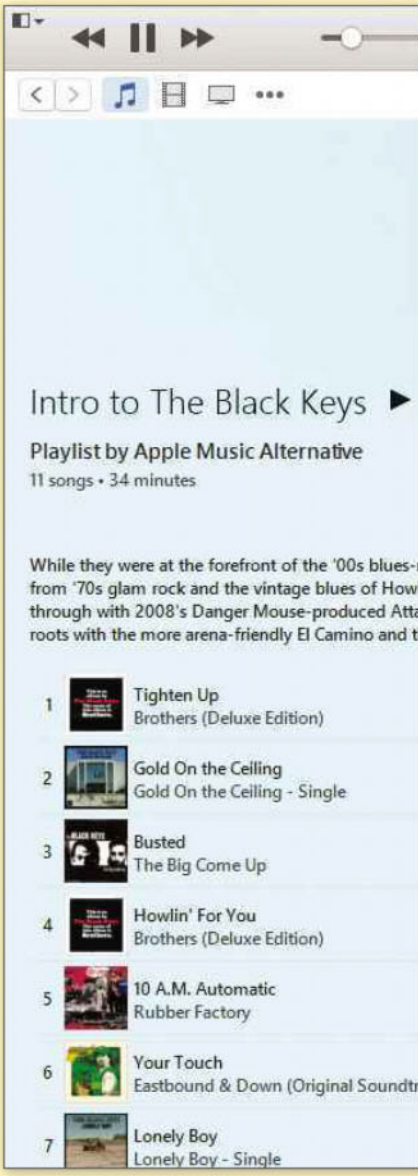
Here, we look at the PC (iTunes) version of Apple Music, but it's essentially the same on iOS devices.

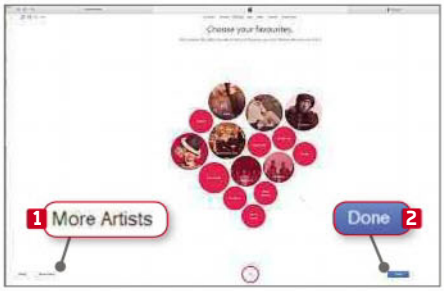


1 Make sure you have the latest version of iTunes installed. A splash screen will invite you to join Apple Music. Do this, then choose a membership plan. You can upload music stored on your computer to the iCloud Music Library, so it can be accessed on an iOS device. Click the For You option. 1



2 Select your preferred genres of music. Click once on any you like, and twice on the ones you love. You can remove anything you don't like by hovering your mouse over a bubble and clicking the small X. You can also start from scratch by clicking Reset. 1 When done, click Next. 2

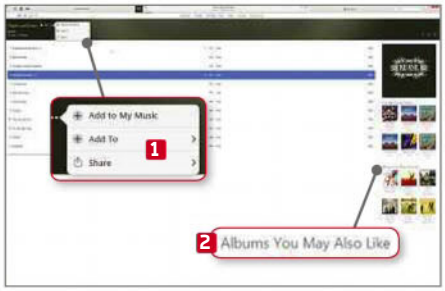




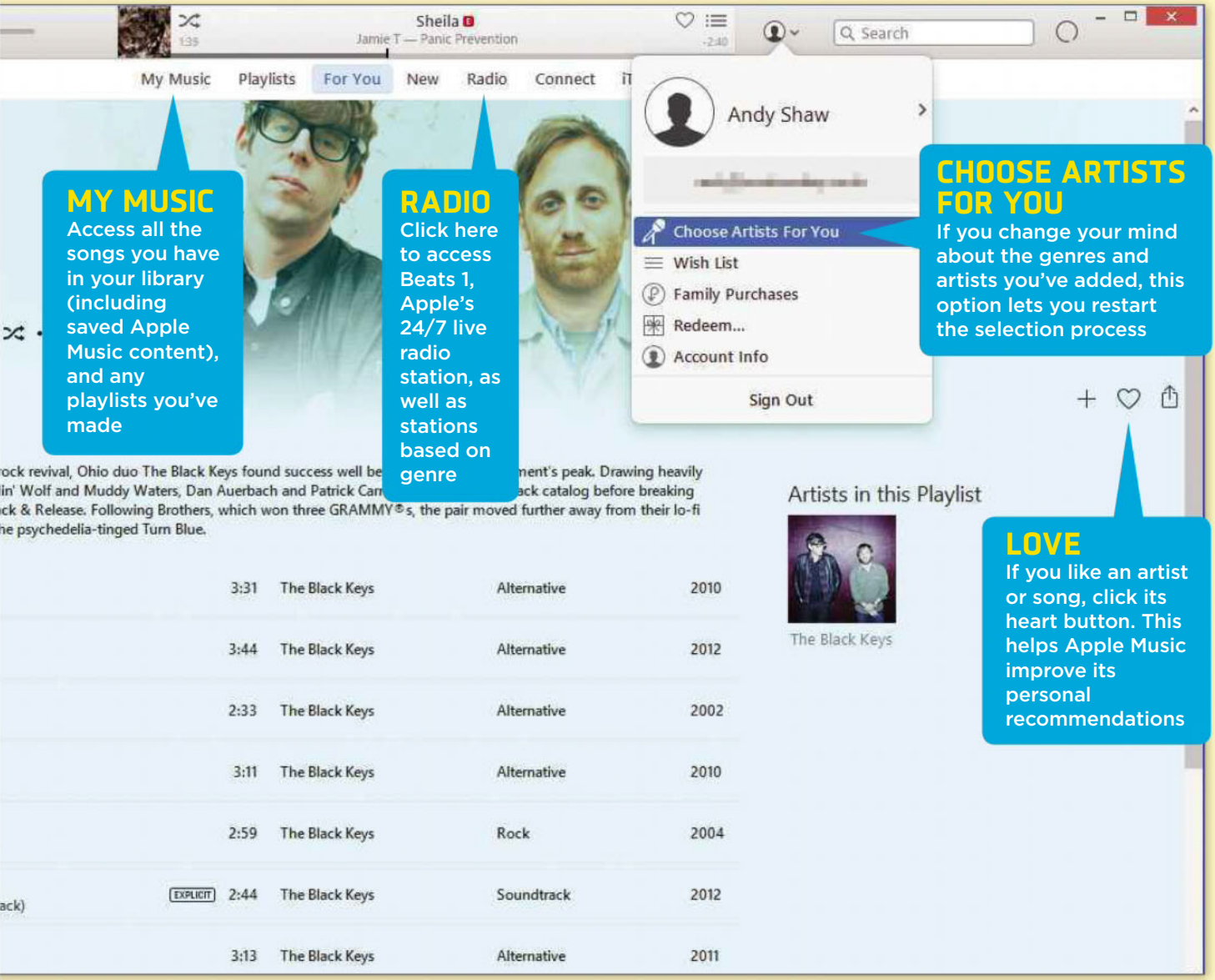
3 You'll now see a selection of artists Apple Music thinks you might like. As before, single-click any that you like and double-click the ones you love. You can reset the selection at any time. Click the More Artists button 1 to add further choices to the mix. When you're happy with your selection, click Done. 2

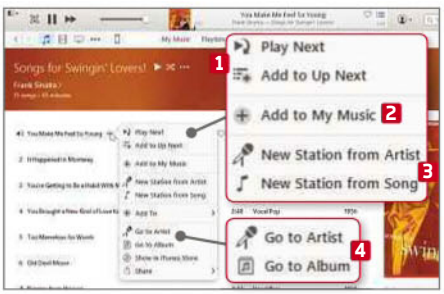


4 You'll see some playlists 1 and albums 2 you might like. Hover your mouse over one of them and click the Play button 3 to start listening. You can control playback using the slider 4 or the controls, 5 just as you would with locally stored music.

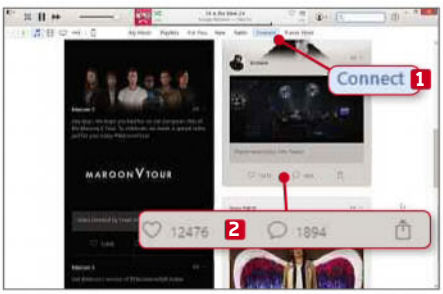


5 Click an item to open its page, which displays all the tracks. Double-click a song to start it playing. You can play the entire album or playlist, randomise the selection, share it or add to My Music or a playlist. 1 You can also browse other related music. 2

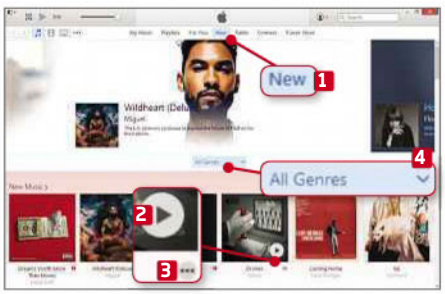




6 Hover your mouse over a music track and click the three dots that appear. You can set that song to play next or add it to the Up Next queue. 1 You can add the song to My Music, 2 or create a new radio station from that Artist or Song. 3 You can also go to that artist or album's page. 4



7 When you go to an artist's page, you'll be able to follow or unfollow them. You'll already be following any artists you selected during the setup process. Click Connect 1 to see news, photos and videos that those singers or bands have shared with their followers. You can like, comment or share a post. 2



8 Click New 1 to browse the latest music; currently popular content; themed playlists; and top songs, albums and videos. Hover over something to start it playing 2 or access the menu. 3 You can select a genre using the drop-down menu, 4 although this doesn't currently do anything in iTunes.

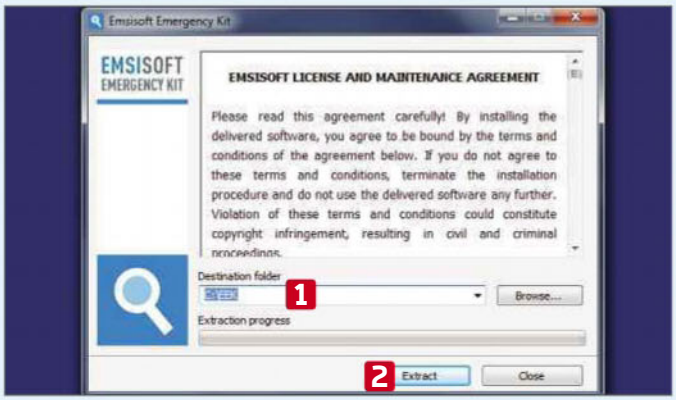
Boost your PC's anti-malware protection

Emsisoft Emergency Kit: bit.ly/emergencykit376 | 10 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8.1+

Emsisoft recently released Emergency Kit 10: a fast, portable malware scanner that protects and speeds up your PC by removing malware and PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). Because the application is portable, it doesn't need to be installed and you can run it alongside other security programs. So even if you already have Malwarebytes Anti-Malware installed on your PC, Emergency Kit can use its own anti-virus scan engines from Emsisoft and Bitdefender as a 'second-opinion' malware scanner.

In this Workshop, we show you how to run a full scan and demonstrate how to use Emergency Kit to quarantine or delete suspicious files. If you'd rather be safe than sorry, Emergency Kit can be set to automatically quarantine threats on completion of the scan, which is quickly reversible if any items turn out to be false positives. The program also has a handy tool that lets you white-list any files that you want to omit from future scans.

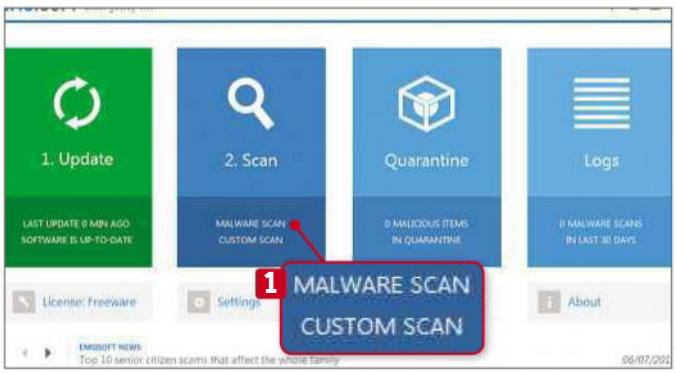




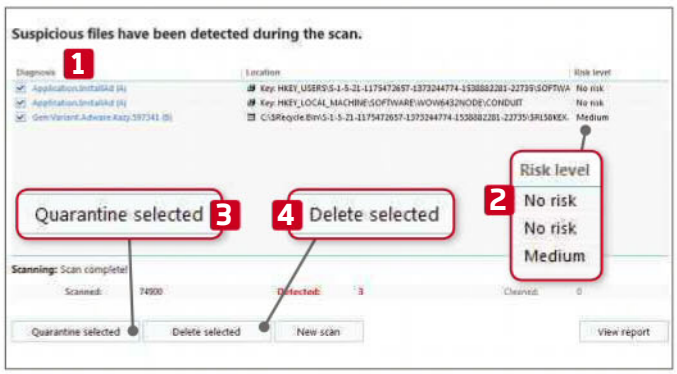
1 Download Emsisoft Emergency Kit and run the executable file. Before using the program, you'll need to choose the destination for its contents, 1 then click Extract. 2 Open the folder using Windows Explorer and click Start Emergency Kit Scanner.



2 When you run Emergency Kit, a notification appears asking you to run an online update to check that you have the latest malware signatures. Click Yes. 1 When the update is complete, the first box 2 turns green to show that its 'Software is up-to-date'.



3 In the second box, click Malware Scan, 1 then Yes to start a thorough scan of your system for malware and PUPs. You can Pause or Stop the scan at any time. The number of detected items appears in red.



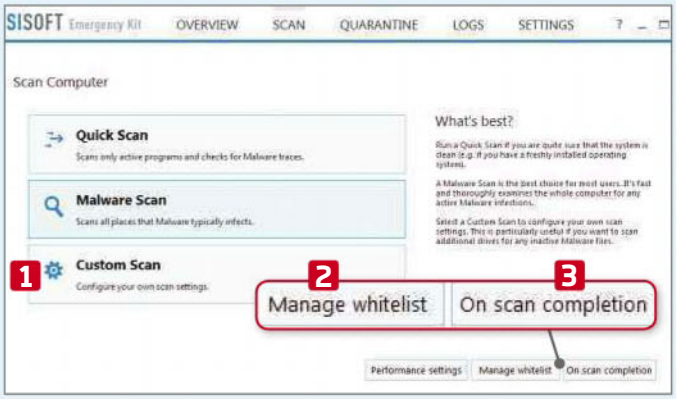
4 Emergency Kit reports its findings on completion of the scan, showing the diagnosis 1 and risk level 2 for each item. You must choose whether to quarantine, 3 delete 4 or do nothing with the identified threats. Click 'View report' to see a TXT file containing a text-based summary.



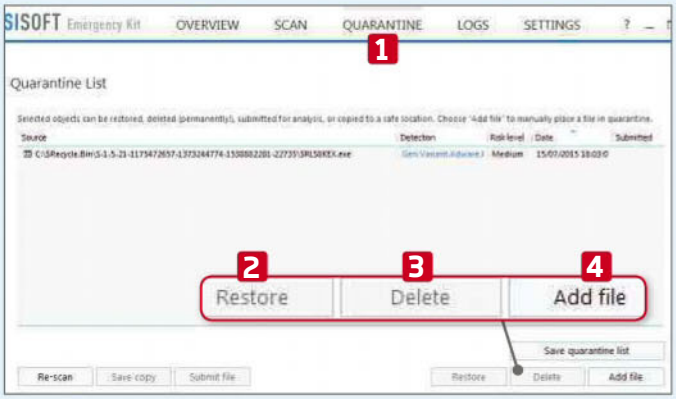
EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn says

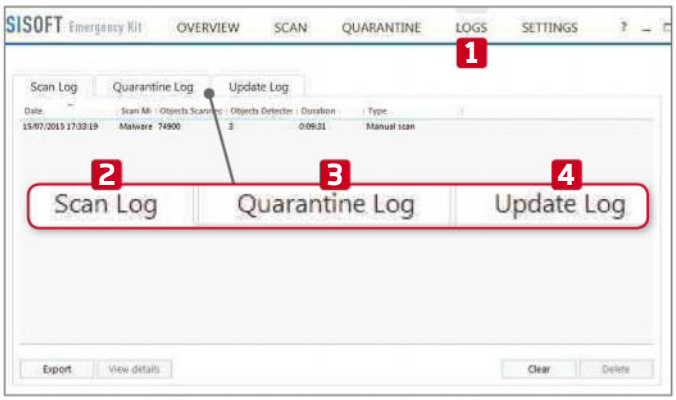
If you discover a suspicious file on your PC that Emsisoft Emergency Kit fails to identify, you can help to improve its malware definitions by visiting bit.ly/submit376 and uploading the file with an accompanying description. You won't receive a response if the file is infected, but the software will be updated to protect against it.



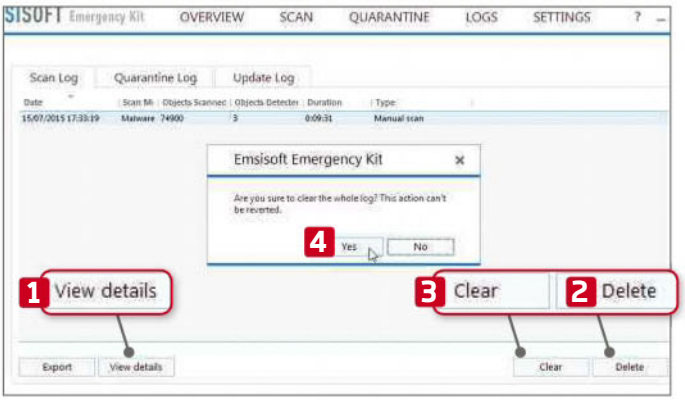
5 Click New Scan to be taken to the Scan menu, where you can configure your own scan settings by selecting Custom Scan. 1 Click 'Manage whitelist' 2 to specify any files you want the program to ignore, and select 'On scan completion' 3 to change its default behaviour once a scan has finished.



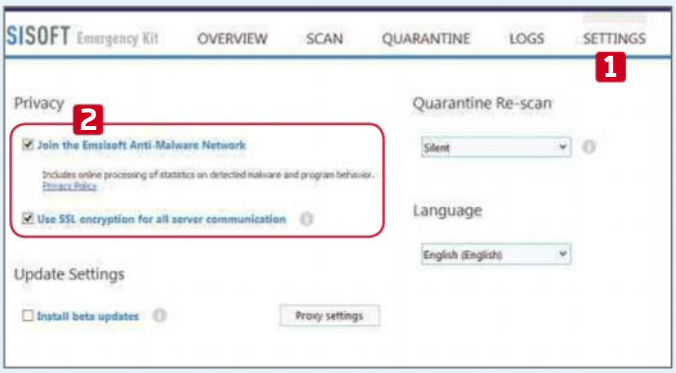
6 Files that have been quarantined can be found by clicking the Quarantine menu. 1 To restore a file, select it and click Restore. 2 Alternatively, click Delete 3 if you're sure you don't need it anymore. You can also manually quarantine files by clicking 'Add file'. 4



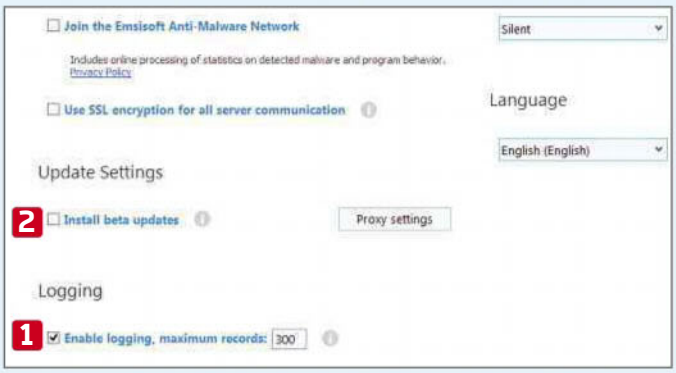
7 Click Logs 1 to see logs of your scans, 2 quarantined items 3 and malware signature updates. 4 If your scans don't appear here immediately, try closing Emergency Kit and reopening it.



8 To see more information about a scan, select it and click 'View details'. 1 You can delete individual logs by selecting them and clicking Delete. 2 To clear all scan logs, click Clear 3 and then Yes. 4



9 Click Settings 1 to configure the software. By default, the program is set to join the Emsisoft Anti-Malware Network and uses SSL encryption for all server communication. 2 You can change these settings by unticking the appropriate boxes.



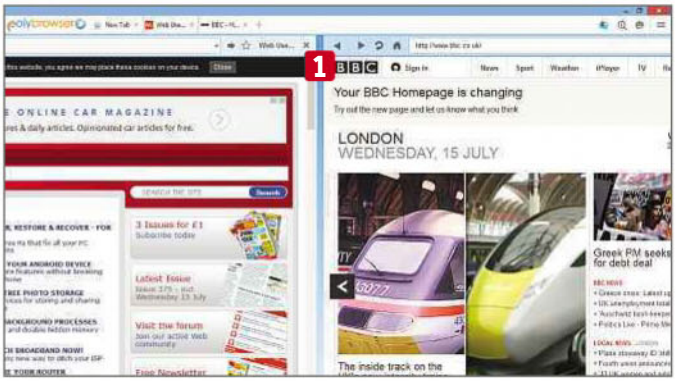
10 To turn off logging, untick the 'Enable logging' box. 1 Tick 'Install beta updates' 2 if you want to download the latest beta update files, but be aware that this could cause the program to behave erratically.

Browse web pages side by side



Tabs are a common way of keeping lots of sites open in your browser, but most browsers don't let you see them side by side. With PolyBrowser, you can scroll between your tabs instead of clicking them, and easily keep several tabs visible on screen at the same time. It also has handy tools for saving groups of tabs so you can open them in one click.

PolyBrowser: polybrowser.com | **10 mins** | **XP, Vista, 7, 8** **Mac OSX 10.7+** **Linux**



1 Instead of switching between tabs that fill the browser window, PolyBrowser opens tabs side by side, 1 so you can scroll between them using your mouse. To do so, right-click and hold, then move the mouse left or right to scroll through the tabs you have open.



2 To increase the number of visible tabs, right-click and move the mouse up to zoom out of the page. You can right-click and drag down to zoom back in again – it will zoom in on the tab you clicked. Alternatively, use the zoom menu, 1 which appears as soon as you start zooming.



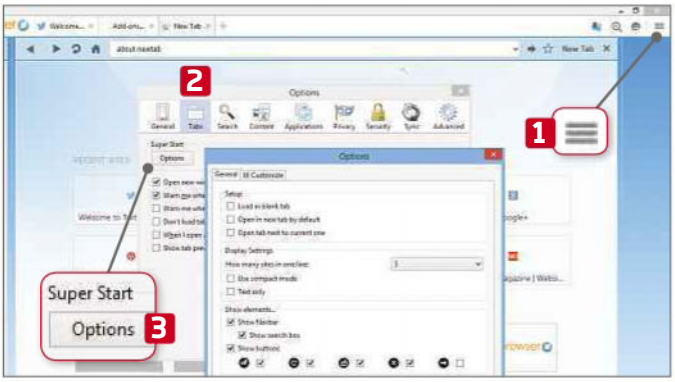
3 You can resize individual tabs to fit the screen rather than zooming out. Click the dotted separators 1 and drag them left or right to increase or decrease the amount of screen space devoted to that specific tab.



4 Use the PolyMarks tool to save groups of tabs and launch them in a couple of clicks. Click the PolyMarks icon 1 and sign up for the service. Click 'Save Tabs as PolyMark' 2 to save the group and give it a name. You can then click the name 3 to relaunch the tabs together.



5 PolyBrowser has the Super Start add-on built-in. Recent sites will appear as icons under the PolyBrowser logo. 1 You can also set up Speed Launcher to save sites to groups. Click the folder 2 to choose individual sites or the Open All icon 3 to open every site in the folder in its own tab.

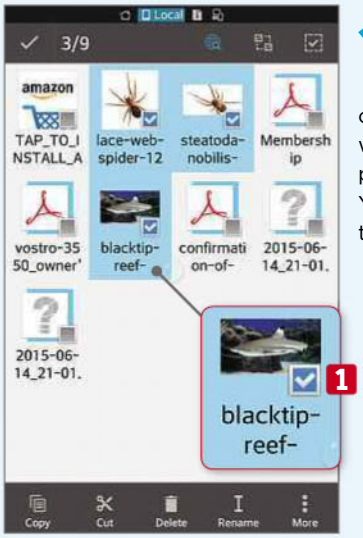


6 Most of the browser settings will be familiar to Firefox users. To get to them, click the Menu button 1 and choose Options. The Tabs tab 2 is slightly different to Firefox, though – click the Super Start Options button 3 to change the way the New Tab screen looks.

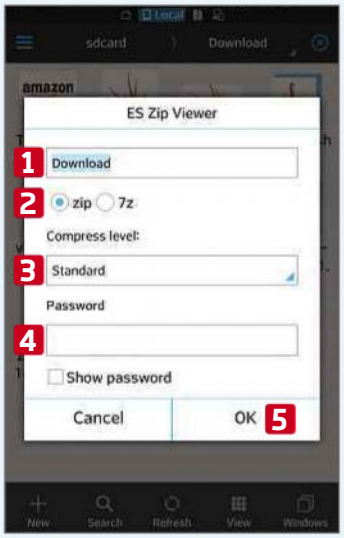
Make more space on your Android device

Android devices are like pocket computers; you can store all manner of files on them, including documents, photos and videos. While this makes them hugely versatile, it also means that you quickly run out of storage space. In this Workshop, we show you how to compress your files using ES File Explorer, so you have more room for apps, games and other files.

ES File Explorer: bit.ly/esfile376 | **5 mins** | **Android 2.0+**



1 Download and install ES File Explorer, then navigate to the folder containing the files you want to compress. Long-press a file to highlight it. 1 You can then tap other files to select them, too.



2 Tap the More button and choose Compress. A window titled ES Zip Viewer appears. From here, you must choose the name of the compressed Zip file, 1 the format 2 and the level of compression. 3 You can also protect the compressed file by entering a password 4 before tapping OK. 5



3 The Zip file appears in the same folder as the files you compressed. 1 To make more space, delete the original files by tapping them (in the same way described in Step 1) and selecting Delete. 2 A box appears showing the total size of the files being deleted.



4 To check the size of your compressed files, long-press the Zip file and tap More, then Properties. 1 To extract the files, tap the Back button twice, then tap the Zip file once. In the dialogue box that appears, tick the 'Set as default app' box and select ES Zip Viewer to proceed.



5 Highlight any files you want to extract and tap Extract. A pop-up asks where you want to extract the files to. 1 Leave the top option selected 2 to extract them to the same folder as the zipped file.



6 Alternatively, tap 'Choose path' to select a location of your choice, then tap OK. A message appears to show that the files were successfully extracted. 1 Tap the Back button to see the folder containing the Zip file (and the extracted files, if you chose the first option).

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance

How to...

Rip, convert and stream your DVDs

Wayne Williams shows you how to clear your living room of DVD clutter and bring your movie collection into the 21st Century

It's a familiar sight in living rooms everywhere: towering stacks of DVDs littered around the TV, from much-loved movies and current favourites to birthday box sets and friends' recommendations that are yet to be watched. While DVDs take up less space than chunky old video cassettes, they still clutter up shelves and cupboards, and the chances are that you only watch them infrequently. In this issue's Weekend Project, we'll show you how to kill two birds with one stone by freeing up space and making your movie collection more accessible.



Rip your DVDs

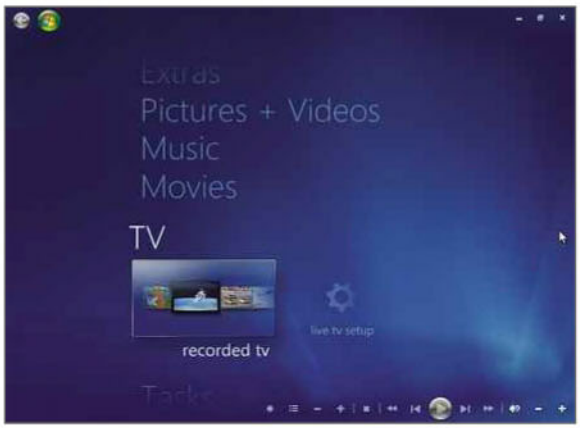
If you want to move your DVD collection out of the living room and into the loft or garage, or simply sell or bin the discs, it makes sense to rip the DVDs so you have a digital copy that you can watch whenever the mood strikes. There are lots of free programs you can use for the task, including popular conversion tools such as Freemake Video Converter (www.freemake.com, but take care to decline any unwanted extras during installation). There's a guide to using it in our Mini Workshop on page 61.

You can rip your discs to a range of formats, although we'd recommend Matroska Video – or MKV, as it's more commonly known. This is a container format that can store numerous video, audio and subtitle tracks, as well as any metadata. Of course, it's only worth ripping to this format if the device you're going to play it on can handle it. PCs will have no problem and most modern standalone media players support the format. It's only older devices that may not recognise it.

Assuming MKV is a format that works for you, the best free ripping tool is probably MakeMKV (www.makemkv.com). As well as converting DVDs into MKV video files, it can also rip Blu-rays, if you have a Blu-ray drive in (or attached



Media centre software such as Kodi can be used to play your movies on a PC or TV



Windows Media Centre comes with many versions of Windows, but it's being phased out with Windows 10

to) your PC. The program is available for both Windows and Mac OS X. See our Mini Workshop, below, to find out how to use it to rip your discs.

Other tools worth considering include WinX DVD Ripper Free Edition (bit.ly/winx376), Format Factory (www.pcfreetime.com) and the open-source StaxRip (bit.ly/stax376). There are also plenty of commercial disc rippers available to buy, including AnyDVD (around £35 from www.slysoft.com) and Any DVD Converter Pro (£21.48 from bit.ly/anydvd376). While these offer some additional features, most people will be better off sticking with free software.

Where to store your movie collection

The obvious place to store your ripped DVDs is on your PC's hard drive. Y ou will need a sizable drive to hold them all and you might want to back up your favourites in case of drive failure (although if you keep the original DVDs, you can simply rip them again). You could also buy or make your own HTPC (Home Theatre PC) just for storing and playing movies – OSMC for the Raspberry Pi (osmc.tv) is a cheap option, though you'll need to store your ripped DVDs on an external USB drive.

Other storage options include a NAS (Network Attached Storage) drive, so your movies can be streamed to any device from anywhere, including over the internet. You can buy ready-made NAS devices that attach to your router, or make your own using FreeNAS (web.freenas.org).

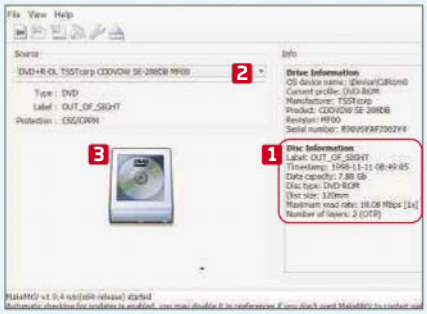


There are also portable media drives, such as the Seagate Wireless (£95 from www.ebuyer.com). This is a battery-powered 500GB drive with a built-in wireless network that can stream movies to up to three smartphones, tablets and laptops simultaneously.

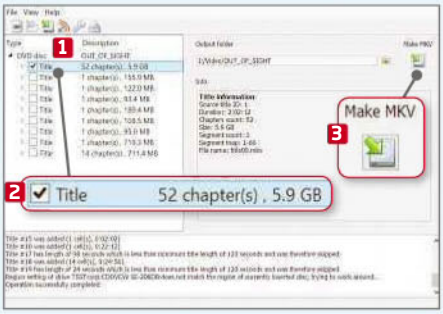
If you have a Blu-ray writer in your PC, you can burn multiple ripped DVDs to a single Blu-ray disc, or save your favourite movies on a USB memory drive. Most modern standalone Blu-ray and DVD players have a USB port and can play movies from a memory stick. Check your player's manual to find out if your make and model can do this.

Keeping movies on a wireless hard drive makes them accessible from any device

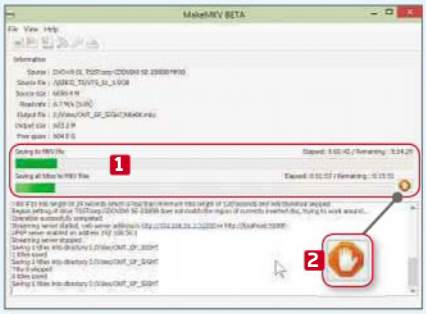
MINI WORKSHOP | Rip DVDs using MakeMKV



1 Insert the DVD you want to rip into your disc drive, then launch MakeMKV. The program will scan the disc and present you with information about it. 1 If you have more than one optical drive, you can select the correct one in the drop-down box. 2 Click the DVD image 3 to open the disc.



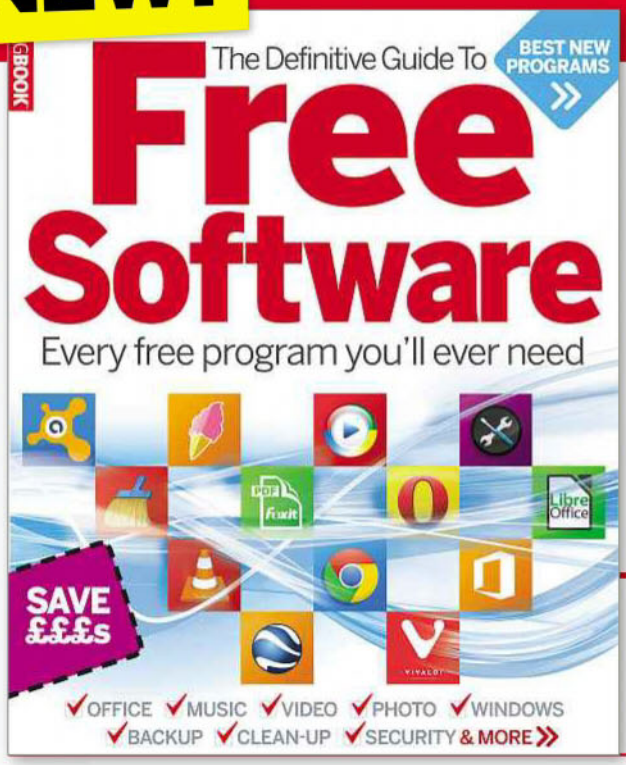
2 The software will scan the disc to locate the video and audio you require, and decrypt the data. After a short while, it will present you with a list of content that can be ripped. 1 Assuming you just want the film itself, select the main (largest) one. 2 Click the Make MKV button 3 and the software will get to work.



3 You'll be prompted to create a save directory for the ripped video. The process will take quite a while to complete. You can view the progress 1 and stop it at any point, should you need to. 2 When it's finished, navigate to the Save directory, rename the file and your movie will be ready to watch.

WebUser Bookstore

NEW!

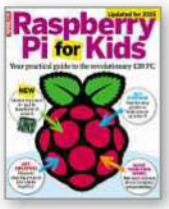


THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FREE SOFTWARE

Free software always sets off alarm bells. Will it be as good as paid-for packages? Will it try to sneak junk on to your PC? Will it constantly nag you to update to a premium version? In our new 148-page book *The Definitive Guide to Free Software*, we recommend only the very best free programs that deliver high-quality features and no nasty surprises (no junk – guaranteed!). It's packed with step-by-step tutorials and how-to guides for safe downloads – plus you'll learn which free anti-virus you should use. In short, it contains every free program you'll ever need.

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
at bit.ly/guidetosoftware

RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS



The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book for 2015 to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+).

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GOOGLE HIDDEN TOOLS



In the 164-page *The Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools*, we lift the lid on Google's most popular tools with more than 430 ways to make them more efficient, useful and tailored to your needs. These include clever add-ons for Chrome, amazing free apps for Android and stunning sights in Google Maps.

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID



Inside this 148-page book you'll find all the free apps, expert tips and easy-to-follow Workshops you need to get the most out of your phone or tablet. You'll find buying advice, including reviews of the latest tablets and phones, and everything you need to know about taking your first steps with your new device.

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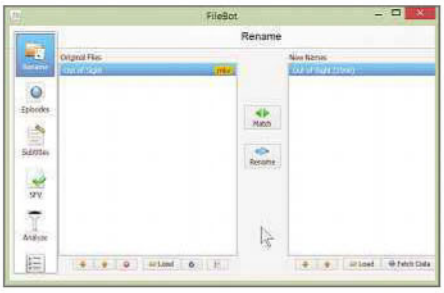
Useful software

Media Player software provides a useful front end for a movie collection stored on a PC. If you're running Windows 7, you can use the built-in Windows Media Center (though this isn't available in Windows 10). There are several other decent free alternatives including Kodi (kodi.tv, which was formerly known as XBMC) and MediaPortal (www.team-mediaportal.com). *Web User* had a round-up of these programs in Issue 372 (bit.ly/issue372).

Plex (plex.tv) is a powerful media server that lets you stream movies stored on a central location (a PC or NAS) to any device on your network. You can buy an app if you'd like to use it on your smartphone or tablet.



Data Crow is an excellent tool for cataloguing a large DVD collection



FileBot automatically finds information about your movie files

A program for cataloguing your movie collection will also come in very handy. One of the best tools for the job is Data Crow (www.datacrow.net) which can manage and organise any kind of media, including books, software, images, music tracks and movies. Select the Movie module, then add your collection to it. The program offers loads of advanced features.

Finally, if you don't want to manually rename individually ripped files (as well as movies you've sourced from other locations), you can use FileBot (www.filebot.net) to organise and rename them for you. It automatically matches your files with data pulled from the web and lets you choose how your files should be named.

Is it legal to rip DVDs?

In October 2014, it was finally made legal for UK residents to rip CDs and DVDs for personal use. Prior to that, creating a copy of your own discs – ripping audio CDs to add your music to iTunes, for example – was against copyright law. However, you still can't rip discs that you don't own – such as those belonging to friends – and you can't rip and convert DVDs wrapped in DRM, for watching on an iPad or Android devices.

While it was great to see some common sense prevail with the updated law, there have been some new complications. At one point, it seemed possible that the UK courts might relax the restriction over making personal copies of DRM-protected media, but in a judicial review sparked by an appeal from the music industry, the High Court struck down the government's new law because there was no compulsory system for compensating copyright holders who might have been "harmed" by the copying. Quite how a copyright holder would be harmed by someone making a personal copy of something they've already paid for is anyone's guess but, as it stands at the time of writing, it's still illegal to rip DVDs, although you're unlikely to get into trouble for doing so. ■

MINI WORKSHOP | Convert DVDs to any format with Freemake Video Converter



1 While DVDs are best ripped to MKV format, you may prefer to save videos for viewing on a particular device, such as an iPad. Freemake Video Converter has several options for saving video files. Insert the disc, click the DVD button **1** and, in the window that opens, navigate to the VIDEO_TS folder **2** on the disc.



2 Click OK and the software will open the DVD. Like MakeMKV, you'll be presented with a list of titles that can be ripped. The main movie file will be selected for you. Click OK and the item will be added to the queue. **1** You can change the audio, **2** add subtitles **3** and make some edits. **4**



3 Choose the type of format or device you want to save the video to. **1** If you want to watch it on an iPad, select 'to Apple'. In the 'output parameters' window, you can pick a preset, **2** change the folder you are saving to and its name, **3** and adjust the size of the file. **4** Click Convert **5** to begin.

NEXT ISSUE **How To...** Hack your router's advanced tools

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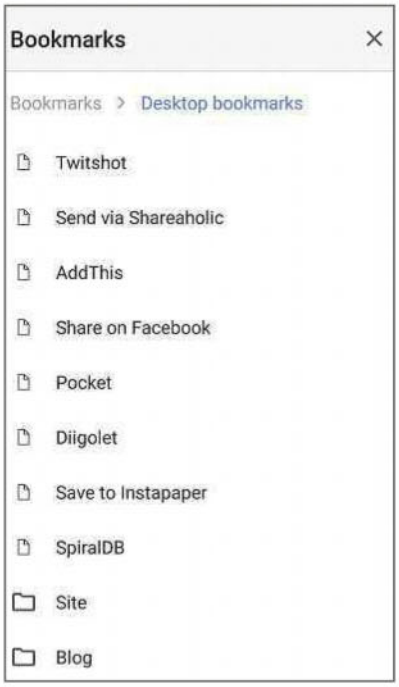
Web User's Top Tips

Our experts show how replacing add-ons with bookmarklets can make your browser faster and lighter

TOP TIPS FOR BOOKMARKLETS

Get browser tools for mobile

The extensions you add to Chrome on your PC won't appear in the portable version of the browser installed on your Android and iOS devices, so you might miss the shortcuts and tools they offer when you're on your phone or tablet. Bookmarklets are a special type of bookmark that provide some (but not all) of the tools that add-ons offer. To add them to your bookmarks bar, press Ctrl+Shift+B (to show the bookmarks bar) then drag and drop your bookmarklets to it. They can then be accessed on your phone or tablet like regular bookmarks, but instead of taking you to a website, they perform useful functions. In Chrome, tap the three-dots menu button, select Bookmarks and go to 'Desktop bookmarks'.



Use bookmarklets on your phone and tablet instead of add-ons

Bookmark the website

Some browser add-ons work by simply taking you to a website. For example, the Twitter dashboard app TweetDeck, available from the Chrome Web Store, simply takes you to tweetdeck.twitter.com. Instead of bloating your browser by adding it as an extension, you could simply add it as a bookmark or Favorite. Just drag the URL to the Bookmarks bar (in Chrome or Firefox) or the Favorites bar (in Internet Explorer). No add-on or extension is needed, so your browser is lighter, faster and less bloated.

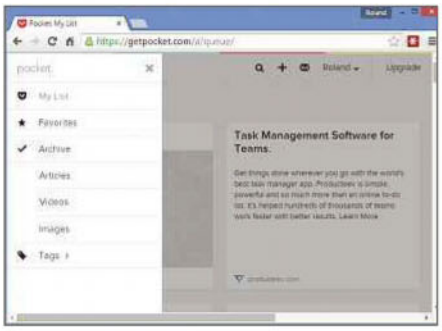
There are lots of other apps and extensions in the Chrome Web Store that act in a similar way. When you install an add-on or extension to your browser, make sure you're getting more than just a bookmark – otherwise, remove it.

Outlook, for example, just takes you to the Outlook website, as do lots of other add-ons such as Word, OneDrive, Google News, Google Play, Pixlr Editor, WeVideo, various games and much more. Instead of installing them as add-ons, try adding them to the bookmarks bar.

If you see words that `look like they've been typed in a typewriter`, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.

Post to Pocket

Pocket saves web pages you don't have time to read so you can enjoy them later (see our round-up of read-it-later services on page 46). The Pocket extension for Chrome adds a button to the toolbar that you can click when you want to add a web page to Pocket. You can view all the pages you've saved at getpocket.com.



Save web pages to Pocket with a bookmarklet instead of the add-on

The Pocket bookmarklet is a fraction of the add-on's size and does the same job. Go to getpocket.com/add and click the link 'Or install the bookmarklet', then drag the Pocket button to your browser's Bookmarks bar. Click the bookmark to add the web page you are viewing to Pocket. Firefox users have the Pocket add-on preinstalled.

Instapaper in an instant

Instapaper is similar to Pocket and can be used for saving web pages to read later. Go to www.instapaper.com and sign in, then go to www.instapaper.com/save. Drag the 'Save to Instapaper' button to your browser's bookmarks bar to install it.

Add a Diigolet

Diigo is a popular web service that lets you bookmark web pages, read them later, add sticky notes, save highlighted sections and more. It has extensions for IE, Firefox and Chrome, but the bookmarklet does the job well by itself. Go to bit.ly/diigo376, click the Diigolet button, then drag and drop it to any browser's Bookmarks or Favorites bar. Click the bookmarklet to pop up a mini toolbar at the top of the browser window, then choose an option such as Highlight, Bookmark, Read Later, or Share.

Social sharing

When you read a news story, or find a funny photo or a great website, you don't have to use a browser add-on to share it with your friends. Sometimes it is possible to perform the same task using a bookmarklet. You might not get every feature offered by the add-on or extension, but the basic tool can still do the job.

If you want to share websites on your Facebook timeline, go to bit.ly/fbshare376 and drag the 'Share on Facebook' button to the bookmarks or Favorites bar.



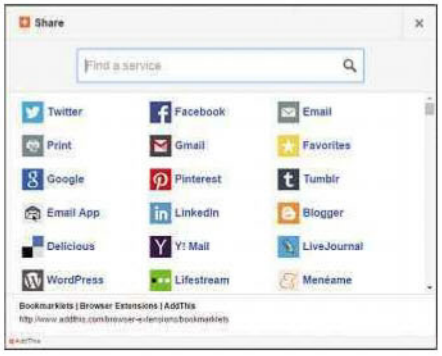
The Facebook bookmarklet lets you post to your timeline

Instead of using Twitter extensions, get the bookmarklet from bit.ly/twit376 and click it to post a tweet. The Twitshot bookmarklet, which is at the bottom of the page at www.twitshot.com, lets you tweet about a site and also include a photo. LinkedIn updates can be posted by adding the bookmarklet at www.linkedin.com/bookmarklet.

Advanced link sharing

There are add-ons you can use to share web content across all your social networks and other services simultaneously, and some of them have bookmarklets that can do the task simply and efficiently. If you use AddThis to share stuff you find on the web, uninstall it and use the bookmarklet instead. Go to bit.ly/addthis376 and drag the bookmarklet button to the toolbar.

Shareaholic is a similar sharing service. Instead of using its browser add-on, go to bit.ly/holic376 and drag the 'Send via Shareaholic' button to the toolbar to add it.



The AddThis bookmarklet lets you share web finds through lots of services

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

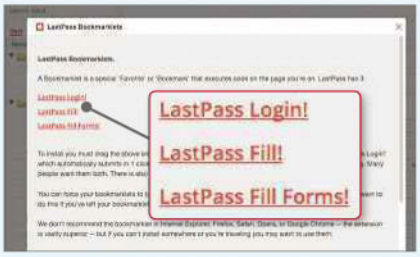
Organise your bookmarklets

The bookmarks bar is the most convenient place to keep your bookmarklets, but it can quickly fill up. One solution is to shorten the names so more of them fit. Right-click Chrome's bookmarks bar and select Edit. Change the 'Share on Facebook' bookmarklet to 'F' or 'Fbk'; change Pocket to 'P' or 'Pkt'; change 'Save to Instapaper' to 'Insta'; and so on.

Another option is to create a bookmarklets folder to store them in. Right-click the bookmarks bar and select Create folder. Name it Bookmarklets, then drag and drop your bookmarklets to the folder in the bar. Click the folder to access all your bookmarklets in one drop-down menu.

LastPass without LastPass

The LastPass password manager remembers all your login details for websites, but it's a big extension. The bookmarklet, on the other hand, is tiny and is almost as good. Go to lastpass.com and log into your account. Expand the Tools section on the left and click Bookmarklets. There are three to choose from: LastPass Login; LastPass Fill; and LastPass Forms. Drag them all to the bookmarks bar. You can now disable the LastPass add-on.



LastPass has three bookmarklets you can use to save and access passwords

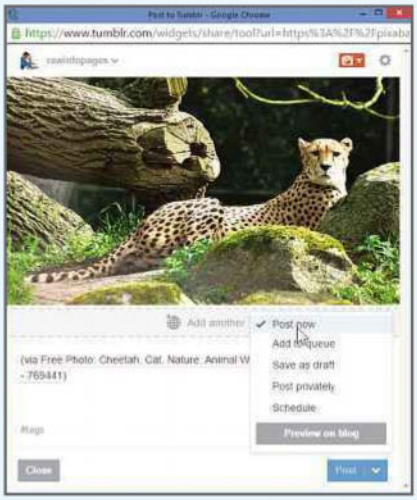
The first time you use a LastPass bookmarklet in a session, you're asked to sign in, but from then on you can just click it to log in, fill forms and so on, as you can with the browser extension. This is a stripped-down version that doesn't support every feature of the add-on, so you might want to keep the extension installed but disabled, just in case you need it.

Shorten long URLs

If you share a lot of web links via email and social media, you probably use a URL shortener. Bitly (bit.ly) is one of the most popular and it has a bookmarklet that saves you having to go to the website to shorten a URL. Go to bit.ly/bitly376 and drag the Bitmark button to the bookmarks bar. The first time you use it, you're asked to sign in (get a free account). After that, you can just click the Bitmark link to create a short URL.

Post to Tumblr

The Tumblr bookmarklet is the most powerful of all the bookmarklets we've covered in these Top Tips, and it has an excellent range of features. Go to tumblr.com/apps and drag the 'Post to Tumblr' button to the bookmarks bar in any browser. Click it to open a small window. The content it displays will depend on the web page being viewed. For example, it might show the page heading in a text post or offer a choice of photos from the web page in a photo post. You can switch between the two using the button in the top-right corner. Click the button next to Post to bring up a menu with options including 'Post now', 'Add to queue' and Schedule. It's a brilliant tool for Tumblr bloggers.



Get the Tumblr bookmarklet and post to your blog more easily

Get website info

If you have a blog or website, you may want to analyse your competitors' data. Get a free account at SpiralDB (spiraldb.com), log in and add the bookmarklet. You can now go to a website, click the bookmarklet and get interesting information, such as the domain authority, which is a measure of a site's popularity.

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



GENERAL PC

Windows updates are crashing my PC

Q I carried out a clean installation of Windows 7 using the disc that came with my PC (which has the SP1 update on it), and it runs perfectly until it installs Windows updates. There are about 187 in all and, after they've been installed, the PC no longer boots up. It goes through the start process but when it gets to the start up sound, the screen goes black.

I've managed to get the PC working by reinstalling Windows and disabling Windows updates before they have a chance to install. However, I'll need the updates to get the free upgrade to Windows 10. How do I get around this?

Terry Wareing, via email

A There are two ways to install Windows 10 and one is through Windows Update. If you have an up-to-date copy of Windows 7 or 8.1 with all the latest service packs, bug fixes and patches, then Windows Update can be used to download them and upgrade the PC. If you don't have all the updates, you can still install Windows 10 when it's released, but you will have to download the ISO image and burn it to a DVD. You can then install it from the disc. So the problem you have will not prevent you from upgrading.

However, it would be best to sort this out now. Instead of using



If you have problems with Windows Update, try installing them manually

Windows Update to get the latest updates, you could download them to your PC and run them from the hard drive. This might solve the problem and is worth trying. Go to Microsoft's 'Service Pack and Update Center' (bit.ly/update376) and follow the link to the Windows 7 service pack download page.

When you click the Download button, you'll see a list of files. The best option is the 1.9GB DVD ISO file, which contains every update for every version of Windows, but it is very large and you'll have to burn it to a DVD to install it.

Down at the bottom of the list are the much smaller files: windows6.1-KB976932-X86.exe for 32-bit Windows and windows6.1-KB976932-X64.exe for 64-bit (the numbering is confusing, but Windows 7 is actually version 6.1). These files are 537MB and 903MB respectively and can be installed from your hard drive. Just double-click them in the Downloads folder to install them.

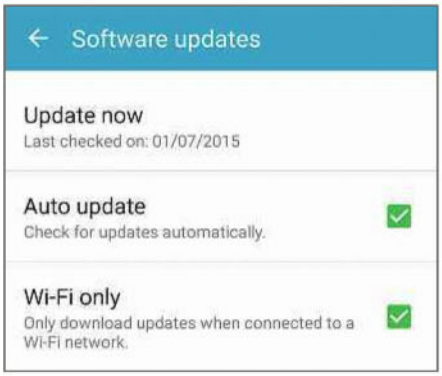
MOBILE

Hudl battery drains too fast

Q I have a couple of problems with my Tesco Hudl. The first is that I have Android version 4.2.2 and cannot seem to upgrade. The second is my battery, which drains very, very quickly. In the end, I decided to factory reset the Hudl. It was fine – I wasn't downloading many apps or games or anything – and then it happened again. It was charged at 100 per cent and after looking at the home screen for about a minute the battery was on 93 per cent.

Joshua Mawer, via email

A Updates to Android on phones and tablets come from the manufacturer and not Google. If a manufacturer chooses not to provide updates, then there is nothing you can do. Android updates are usually automatic, but you



You can manually check for updates on Android by tapping Update now

can check for them by going into Settings and selecting About. Tap Software Updates or System Updates to see when it last checked for an update. There is a link to check again.

The battery problem is being caused by apps. When the battery was draining fast, you factory reset the Hudl and cleared the apps, which then made it work fine. Now that you've downloaded apps, it is draining fast again. If you download a lot of apps and a problem arises, it's hard to tell which one is the cause. If you download one and use it for a few days before downloading another, it's easier to tell which one is causing increased battery drain.

There are many ways to make your battery last longer: reducing the screen brightness, switching off the Wi-Fi when the tablet's not being used, uninstalling apps you don't need and setting a longer update time for apps (such as the time between checks for new email, new Twitter messages and so on).

WINDOWS 10

Fix Windows 8 to upgrade

Q I have a reasonably new HP Pavilion desktop PC that runs Windows 8.1 with few problems. After a failed driver update using Driver Booster (bit.ly/boost376), I had to resort to using the hard-drive recovery image of the original Windows 8 that came with the computer, because it didn't have a recovery disc on CD or DVD. This worked fine.

After much downloading and restoring, I got my system back from the original

Windows 8 to 8.1, and it was in a usable condition. My concern is this: I would like to download Windows 10 but will I have a drive image, disc or similar to be able to restore a corrupted or damaged Windows 10 back to at least a basic usable system?

I run several online businesses, so I am very concerned about the possibility that things might not go well and I'd like to make sure I've got an escape plan so I can get back up and running if things go wrong or I don't like the new OS.

I already have a factory image of Windows 8, so could I use this to get back to a workable Windows 10?

Christine Kitt, via email

A Your original recovery image will be of limited use once you have upgraded because using it will take the computer right back to the day you bought it with a clean install of Windows 8. You could still use it to get back to Windows 10, with all your current software, but it would take a lot of work.

Since Windows 8, a tool has been provided to reset your PC using two options. One keeps your files and the other clears everything out, like a clean install, but they both keep your current version of Windows. In Windows 10, go to the Start menu, Settings, Update & Security, Recovery.

If you are running a business on your computer, you should ensure that you have adequate backup. The best solution is to buy a USB hard drive and to use it to store an exact image of the system. There are lots of backup tools that can make an exact copy of your hard drive and store it on a USB drive. They can then be used to create a boot CD or a boot USB flash memory drive, which can be used to start your computer. If disaster strikes and the computer will not start after installing Windows 10, you can use the boot media and restore the hard drive image. The only loss will be any files you created since the last backup.

Paragon Software Backup & Recovery 14 Free Edition (bit.ly/paragon376), AOMEI Backupper Standard (www.backup-utility.com) and EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/easeus376) are three free tools that can do this. Paid software is even better, such as Acronis True Image 2015 (www.acronis.com).

See our Windows 10 cover feature on page 38 for the low-down on the new operating system.



Use Windows 8's Update & Recovery tools before reinstalling if you've got problems

WEB BUILDING

Responsive website not working

Q I have started to make my website responsive and it seems to be working. The HTML calls a style sheet and sets different screen sizes. However, I've noticed some strange characters after the '.htm' such as '#.vym' and 'dvd', for example 'htm#.VYMUQVJ5bZw'. Is this to do with CSS or UTF-8, or something else?

Adrian Bonnington, via email

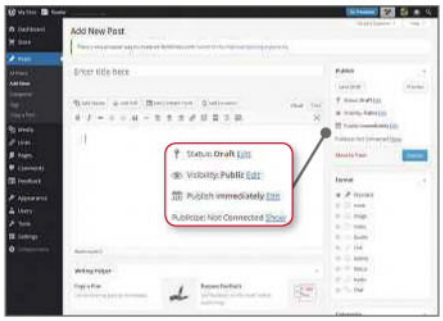
A To explain this, we need to get a bit technical. A normal link to a page on a website looks like this:

```
<a href="http://mysite.com/page.html">
```

That's an *external* link that goes to a new page. If a web page is long, you might want to link to a point further down, such as a different section. This is an *internal* link from one part of the page to another. To do that you insert:

```
<a href="#gohere">
```

This takes the cursor to a place labelled 'gohere' from within the HTML code. Find the point in the code that you want people to skip to and insert:



Content management systems like WordPress makes websites simple

```
<a name="gohere">
```

To link to that point in the page from elsewhere, you would use a URL such as `mysite.com/page.html#gohere`. When a hash (#) follows the name of a web page, it instructs the browser to jump to that point in the page. For some reason, the web-design software you are using is saving pages with this internal link. Check the settings, try using Save As rather than Save, try removing the internal links manually and then see what happens.

If all this fails, try a different designer. Brackets (brackets.io, which is free and great for hand coding) will run on your PC but Xara Web Designer (www.xara.com) is better if you want to avoid HTML. A lot of websites use WordPress (www.wordpress.com if you want a ready-hosted version or www.wordpress.org to host it yourself), which simplifies website design by letting you pick a responsive template from a gallery. You then then enter your site's content using a relatively simple form called a content-management system.

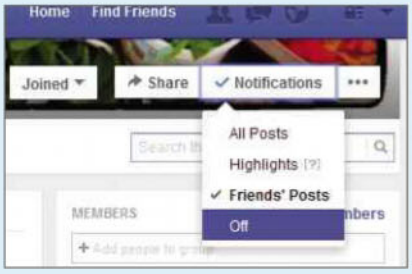
SOCIAL NETWORKING

Silence a noisy Facebook group

Q I recently joined a group on Facebook. I like it but it has more than 1,000 members and there is a lot of chat. Posts from this group, sometimes trivial or unimportant, are filling my Facebook homepage while posts from my friends, which I want to see, are buried and easy to miss. I don't want to leave the group but would like to cut down on the posts I see from it. How can I do this?

Mark Castle, via email

A One method is to click the little downward-pointing arrow in the top-right corner of a post. There are options to hide it or see fewer posts like it. However, we've had mixed results with this. Another option, which we've found works better, is to go to the group's page. At the top of the page on the right side of the image is Notifications. There is a choice of All Posts, Highlights, Friends' Posts and Off. Select Off and it hides nearly everything.



If Facebook groups are too noisy you can turn down the chatter



This fortnight Roland has been installing Windows 10 and getting to grips with the new operating system

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk



TOP TIP

£25 winner

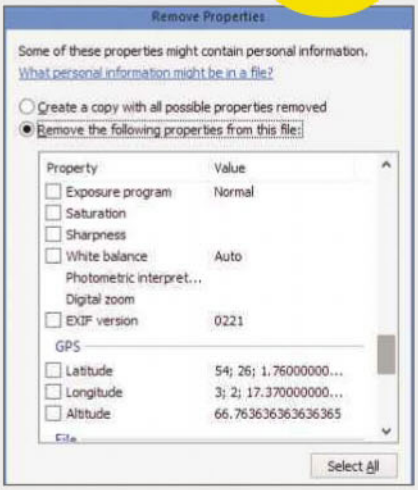
GENERAL PC

Hide file properties

Some files contain hidden properties that aren't immediately obvious. For example, every photograph you take on a digital camera or phone contains a lot of information, including the camera model, shutter speed and aperture. It may also contain geographic location information that can be used to identify you and where you live. Before sharing photos online, I remove this information.

In Windows 8.1, choose a photo in Explorer, then select the Home tab form the ribbon at the top. Click the drop-down arrow under Properties and select 'Remove properties'.

In Windows 7, you can do the same thing by selecting the photo, clicking the Organize button and selecting 'Remove properties'. In the window that appears, there is an option to create a copy of the file with all its properties removed, or you can remove individual properties from the list below.



View a file's properties and delete any data you don't want to share

Tom Cannon, via email

ANDROID

Play YouTube music in the background

Unless you subscribe to Google Play Music All Access, it's impossible to keep videos playing in the Android YouTube app when it's minimised. If, like me, you've created music playlists on YouTube over the years, you'll find it very frustrating that songs are interrupted the second you lock your device or try to use another app, especially because leaving it on the screen makes the battery drain more quickly.



Tick the 'Unknown sources' box to install apps from outside the Google Play store

Fortunately, there's an app called FireTube that makes it possible to keep YouTube music playing in the background without adverts. The app costs £1.92, if downloaded from the Play Store, but you can get it for free if you download it from the Amazon App Store. To do this, visit www.amazon.co.uk/androidapp and download Amazon for Android. Before you can use the Amazon app, you'll need to visit the Security section of Settings to make sure your device lets you install apps from unknown sources, but otherwise installing it should simply mean opening the APK file you've downloaded.

Once it's up and running, search Amazon for FireTube and install the app. The main shortcoming of FireTube is that it only lets you listen to music and won't let you watch the videos, but since the YouTube app lets you do that, it's really not a problem.

Jack Gold, via email

KINDLE

Send files to Kindle wirelessly

Did you know that you can send many types of document to your Amazon Kindle without needing to convert them first? Kindle supports DOC, DOCX, HTML, RTF, PDF and several other file types, and you can send these documents directly to your device by simply attaching them to an email and sending it to your Kindle email address.

If you're not sure what your Kindle address is, visit www.amazon.co.uk/myk, select Settings and scroll down the page until you find Send-to-Kindle E-Mail Settings. If you have more than one Kindle, or you use the Kindle app on your smartphone or tablet, you'll have a different address for each device. From the same page, make sure that the email address you're sending the document from is listed in your Approved Personal Document E-mail List or you won't receive it.

To convert your files to the Kindle format, simply add `convert` to the title of your email and it'll be converted before it appears on your Kindle, letting you take advantage of tools such as variable font size and annotations. I have sent numerous PDFs to my Kindle in this way and find the service very useful.

FratPark, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 8.1

Customise your jump lists

Jump lists are the menus that appear when you click icons pinned to the taskbar. If you don't like how they are configured, you can make them more useful with a quick tweak.

Right-click an empty part of the taskbar and select Properties on the



Customise the jump list menu and choose what you want to see

menu. Select the Jump Lists tab. There are two tick boxes which let you show recently opened programs and/or recently opened items (files) on the jump-list menu. There is an option at the top to set the number of items to show. For some reason, my computer was not set to show recent items and the number to display was set to zero. Ticking the box and setting the number to 10 has made my jump lists more useful. I can now right-click an icon and open a file in a program with just one more click.

Phil Maloney, via email

BROWSERS

Make browser notes

When you are browsing the web and want to take notes, there is a strange URL that you can enter to turn a Chrome or Firefox tab into a notepad. Type `data:text/html, <html contenteditable>` into the address bar and press Enter, then click inside the empty window and start typing. You can also copy and paste the text – left-click and highlight the text on the page, right-click and select Copy. To paste text copied from elsewhere, press Ctrl+V.

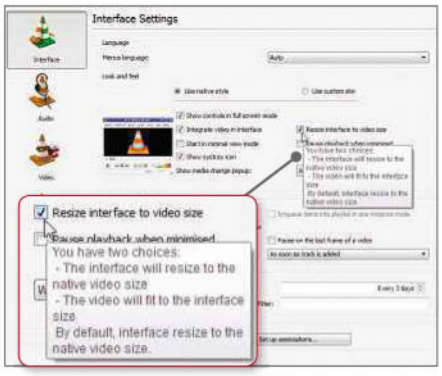
You can even right-click images on web pages, then copy and paste them into the notepad. To save your notes, press Ctrl+A (to select everything), then Ctrl+C to copy them, then switch to another program, such as WordPad, and press Ctrl+V to paste them.

Paul Hardie, via email

SOFTWARE

Stop VLC from auto-resizing its window

I've always loved VLC Media Player (www.videolan.org) but it has a feature enabled by default that makes the playback window resize according to the size of the video you're playing. While this doesn't necessarily sound like a bad thing, it can be very irritating if you haven't got a large monitor, because the window is sometimes enlarged to the point that you can't see the player's controls.



VLC is set to resize its interface to the video size by default

Thankfully, this can easily be switched off. To do so, click Tools and Preferences (Ctrl+P) and untick 'Resize interface to video size'. Then click Save. I much prefer for a video to fit to the size of the VLC interface so I have full view of the controls before choosing the size at which I want to view it.

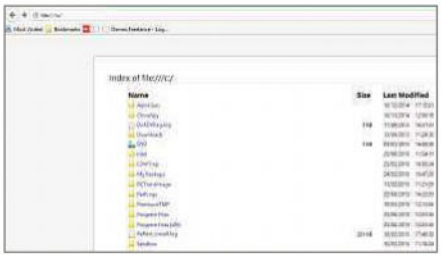
Tom Bolton, via email

BROWSERS

Browse your hard drive

I am not completely sure why you would want to do this, but you can use your browser to explore the contents of your hard drive. If you type `c:\` into the address box in Internet Explorer, it will open a regular Explorer window, but if you do the same in Chrome and Firefox you'll see the drive's contents displayed in the browser window. You can click folders to open them, and click files to view them, such as photos, images and text files. It is an odd feature but some might find it useful.

Keith Mathers, via email



Explore your hard drive using Firefox or Chrome instead of Explorer

SOFTWARE

Use a keyboard shortcut to undo changes

This morning I spent a long time typing a report in Microsoft Word. Then, I don't know what happened, but I accidentally deleted everything. I was in a panic until a friend who was visiting looked at me in amazement and said, "Use Control+Z". I did this and, as if by magic, the whole report re-appeared. I have had a PC for many years but somehow this shortcut was new to me, so it might be for others, too. It works in most software that I've tried it with, so it's worth giving it a go if you make a mistake.

Reena, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Swap international keys on the keyboard

After I reinstalled Windows 7 on my laptop, I typed an email address only to discover that the @ and inverted comma keys had somehow been swapped. That is to say, whenever I pressed Shift+2, an @ symbol appeared and when I pressed Shift+', an " appeared. I racked my brains as to what might have caused the problem and it occurred to me that Windows might have defaulted to a US keyboard rather than a UK one.



Make sure that English (United Kingdom) is set as your default input language

To change this option, you need to open 'Clock, Language and Region' from the Control Panel and click 'Change keyboards or other input methods'. Next, click 'Change keyboards' and make sure that English (United Kingdom) is set as your default input language. If it's not listed, click the Add button alongside 'Installed services' and find English (United Kingdom) in the drop-down list. Once you've done this, your keyboard should work as normal again.

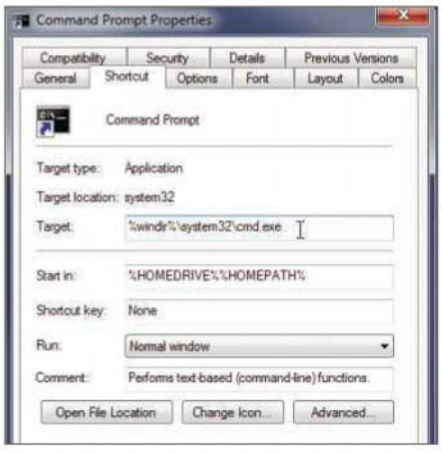
Terry Evans, via email

GENERAL PC

Run Command Prompt as administrator with shortcut

If you use Windows 7, you'll know that you occasionally need to run Command Prompt as an administrator for commands to work. It's easy to forget this until it's too late. To avoid making the same mistake over and over again, why not make a shortcut that opens the console as an administrator every time? To do this, type `command prompt` into the Start menu, right-click it and select Properties and Shortcut. From this tab, choose Advanced, tick 'Run as administrator' and click OK and Apply. You can then copy the target and use this for the shortcut location.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums



Create a shortcut for double-click access to Command Prompt as an administrator



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

EMAIL

Will Windows Live Mail work in Windows 10?

Q I use Windows Live Mail 2012. When I try to open my emails, I get the error message: "POP3 server has not responded in 300 seconds. Would you like to wait?".

I tried contacting Microsoft, but was told that they no longer support the software. Also, I've heard that Windows Live Essentials will no longer exist when Windows 10 is released, so does this mean I shouldn't proceed with the upgrade?

slickstar, Web User Forums

A The error you're receiving is probably a result of a temporary problem with the email server. I have six accounts on Windows Live Mail and I have had this happen occasionally. Fixing it is usually just a matter of waiting until the server problems are resolved. In the meantime, you can always try signing into the webmail service for your account, if you have one, to see if that works.

I'm not sure where you've got the information regarding Windows Live Mail not being supported in Windows 10. I currently have Windows Live Mail, Movie Maker and Windows Media Player working in the Insider Preview. I haven't read anywhere that the programs (available via a Windows Essentials download) won't work or will be removed during an upgrade. I know that Windows Media Centre will be removed, if you currently have it installed, but this is not the same thing.

You have a year to consider whether you want to upgrade to Windows 10, so it's probably worth waiting to see what teething problems other users face before taking the plunge. Based on a thread on the Microsoft forums (bit.ly/windows376), it looks as if Windows Live Mail should work with Windows 10. If it doesn't, Microsoft may provide another Desktop mail application or improve the app supplied with Windows 8.1. It's just a case of waiting and seeing.

Helmut and Moonshine, Web User Forums



Windows Live Mail should work in Windows 10, but check before you upgrade

SOFTWARE

How do I delete a partition from my hard drive?

Q I have a hard drive that's split into two partitions. The partition allocated to my C: drive is only 300GB and is nearly full, so I was hoping to expand it by deleting my D: partition. I have tried to look for information on how I might do this, but found a variety of different opinions. Can anyone help, please?

chulalongkorn, Web User Forums

A I'd recommend using a third-party partition manager because it will be easier to use and more flexible than Windows' built-in Disk Management tool. My preferred choise is EaseUS Partition Master (free from www.partition-tool.com) but there are several others available.



EaseUS Partition Master lets you manage and resize partitions on your hard drive

It's worth noting that if D: is a recovery partition, you won't be able to expand C: without first deleting D:, in which case, you should establish an alternative method (either cloning or imaging the hard drive) for restoring your OS in case of a major malfunction.

calimanco, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Can I use software without connecting to the web?

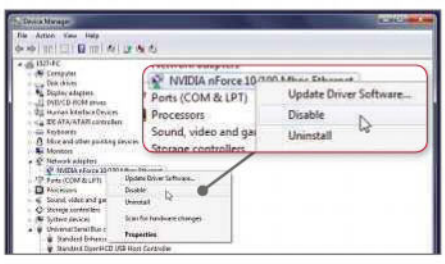
Q Is it possible to use software such as Photoshop on my PC without connecting to the internet?

Jedi, Web User Forums

A Yes, you can run most software on your PC without giving it access to the internet. To stop your PC from connecting, open Device Manager, find the entry for 'Network adapters' and right-click the adapter to disable it. When you want to go back online, simply repeat the process, but click Enable instead of Disable. You can also disable and enable the network adapter from the Control Panel by clicking 'Network and Internet', View Network Status, then Change Adapter Settings.

Take a look at the articles at Digital Inspiration (bit.ly/internet376) and Ghacks (bit.ly/internetoff376) about free software that does the same thing with fewer clicks. If you want password-protection, parental control software is probably the best option.

calimanco and Stewart40, Web User Forums



To turn off your internet connection, disable your network adapter in Device Manager

Inbox

Star Email

£25 winner

Never forget that Google is watching you

In Issue 374 (bit.ly/webuser374), your main cover feature encourages us to 'Beat Google's restrictions'. Some of the advice was indeed useful, but I don't feel you really addressed the most important problem with using Google, which millions – perhaps billions – of people fail to bear in mind when they search the web, look up places on Google Maps and download apps to their Android phones.

I refer to the matter of privacy. Despite Google's constant denials that it is tracking everything we do and its claims that it only collects our personal information for our own benefit, I don't think you can mention Google without dealing with its reckless attitude towards privacy. Have people forgotten that only a few years ago Google was taken to court for using its Street View cars to drive around collect data from the houses it photographed? Of course, Google said that it had gathered the data inadvertently, but are we really supposed to believe that the biggest technology company in the world didn't know exactly what it was doing?

I stopped using Gmail when I read that Google was scanning messages so that it could display adverts relating to their content. This meant that if I mentioned to my friend Pete that I was thinking of buying a new lawnmower, I would then start to see adverts for lawnmowers above my Inbox – and so would poor Pete!

Worst of all is Google's eagerness to hand over data about its users to government agencies, presumably to get them off its own back. Yes, I'm aware that other tech companies were also obliged to do this, but we have to ask why Google was storing all this information in the first place.

So, by all means, continue to use Google, but always be aware that you're constantly under surveillance.

Mason Burgess, Chortlon

Why Windows Phone is the best mobile platform

I completely agree with Samuel Jones's letter, 'Stop neglecting Windows Phone users' (Star Email, issue 374). I've had my Nokia Lumia 620 for almost two years and I wouldn't think of switching back to Android (especially after reading reviews about the new 5.0 Lollipop update) or Apple, and yes, I've owned and used devices extensively on both these other platforms.

My Windows phone interface is uncomplicated and very easy to navigate. The phone has a dedicated camera button, which means I don't even need to unlock it or touch the screen; I just hold down the button and it starts taking pictures. I also think the Nokia Here Drive+ sat-nav app is brilliant, because it works offline without using my data plan and is better than most dedicated store-bought sat-navs. And now with a recent update, I have Cortana, which is proving to be invaluable.



But I've often seen ads on the TV that say: "just download the app for your smartphone", only to find that my Windows Phone apparently doesn't fall into this 'category'. So please *Web User* magazine, remember that there is a third mobile phone platform out there – and it's excellent!

Alan Hayward, via email

Windows Phone rules my life!

I have to agree with Samuel Jones' letter in Issue 374, because I use a Nokia 630 Windows 8.1 phone. We *have* been neglected and I for one am wholly fed up with the snide comments from Android users. As a senior citizen aged 72, I find my Windows 8.1 phone far superior to any iPhone or iPad. It runs my life for me from the calendar and I wouldn't swap it for an iPhone if you paid me!

Stella Sweeney, Boston, Lincolnshire

Overclocking your PC is a recipe for disaster

In Issue 374 of *Web User*, the Weekend Project is about overclocking your PC. Having read the article, I felt it was a charter for 'tinkerers' to completely mess up their computers. In the third paragraph, the writer states: "with so many different types of hardware available, it's impossible to write a guide

You can let us know your views and opinions via:
webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine, www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk



that covers everything". He also says that you might want to search the web for more information about overclocking your particular make and model of hardware. The article then goes on to say that you might want to fit extra fans to disperse the heat build-up or even buy a new and faster processor.

Some *weekend* project! The dangers are clearly stated more than once in the article, but I feel that this type of Workshop is a recipe for disaster. This subject is for people who are confident with messing with the BIOS and who know what to do if you cock up.

In my opinion, this is a specialist topic, and not suitable for weekend 'fiddlers'. I don't think that people with that technical knowledge would bother spending two quid on *Web User*. There are so many other safer subjects you could write about.

Fossewayfella, Web User Forums

Andy Shaw, *Web User* Technical & Reviews Editor says: I understand your reservations about overclocking and agree that it isn't for everyone. However, I believe it was a valuable article to run in the magazine.

I'm sure that some readers will have heard about overclocking, but perhaps not know exactly what it is or what's involved, and the purpose of the article was partly to clear this up. Although we couldn't follow this up with accurate information on how to overclock all hardware in every situation on every PC, we thought it would be useful to introduce readers to some of the tools they can use to ensure this kind of thing is done in a safe and controlled manner, and to offer some practical examples.

I'm sorry you feel it was inappropriate and we certainly won't be doing Weekend Projects of this magnitude in every issue of *Web User*. However, sometimes we do like to nudge your boundaries a little!

Anyway, your feedback has been noted - we appreciate knowing what you think, whether it's good or bad. I'd be delighted to hear what you and other readers would like to see in future Weekend Projects.

Have our phones become government spies?

Regarding the article in Issue 374, 'Stop your phone spying on you'. Recent events in my life have prompted me to write to *Web User* to ask if anyone else has noticed how this government is tracking people, even for little things such as claiming sickness benefits?

Conspiracy theorists would say that governments are backing new technologies because they want to use them to control the population, but is this true? Like many people, we all want to stay in touch with friends and family using social media, and one perceptive American writer has asked: "why do we need organisations such as the CIA and MI5, when we place all personal and professional life on social media for all to see?".

Dealing with a health problem recently, and following advice from my doctor to get out and walk more, I had a telephone call from a government department asking me where I was and how far I had been walking and why. This prompted me to turn off certain features on my mobile phone because the questioning was getting too close to the truth. Call me paranoid, but my claim for benefits was closed soon after, although I still have medical certificates proving I am unable to work, unlike those people you see in newspapers who regard themselves as unfit while running marathons and getting thousands of pounds.

So the question is: are we being spied upon not only for what a company can sell us, but for what the government does not want us to have? Have the spies come to the common man in the street, in the form of our own mobile phones?

Terry Bradley, Milton Keynes



My smart TVs have beauty *and* brains

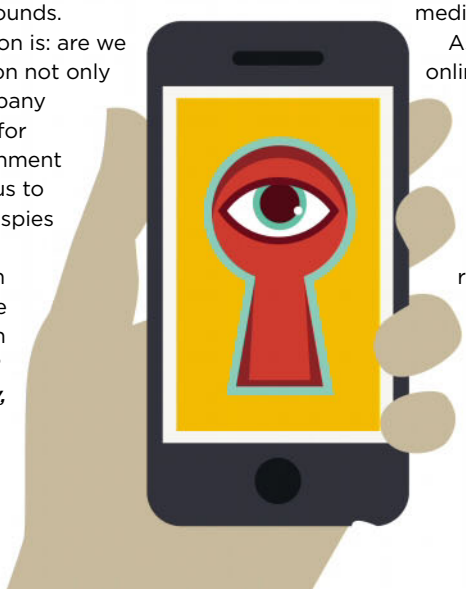
Regarding the recent discussion about smart TVs in *Web User*: Smart TVs are great if you buy an LG Smart TV, *not* a Sony or a Panasonic. I have a 55in LG Smart TV and a 32in in my bedroom. Both are brilliant, and have YouTube, Amazon Prime, Netflix and many other apps. I use Sky broadband, which is very slow, but I have a great picture each night. I love my smart TVs!

James Sprott, via email

Learning the etiquette of social media

I'm a newbie to social media. For a long time, I simply wasn't interested. I knew, of course, that for someone with a project to promote, it was an essential tool, yet at the same time, I was put off joining social media because I didn't fancy being tied to my computer every minute of the day!

Then, in the summer of 2014, my husband and I came up with the idea of a new fiction-based e-magazine called Kishboo (www.kishboo.co.uk). I realised that we needed to publicise it and that it was essential that we used social media for this.



As I became more involved online, attracting Twitter followers and making Facebook friends, I began to observe the unwritten rules, such as always try to be positive and cheerful, publish relevant messages only and don't pester people.

You should also consider giving lots of support and encouragement. I learnt how to do this with my

own online writer's group. If someone has posted "I'm going for a job interview", it's sporting to reply "Good luck"! Or, if they're unwell, "Get well soon".

On a personal note, I've also unfollowed folk on Twitter who constantly tweet about football, as neither me nor my hubby are interested in sport! As I became more experienced, I learnt to be more selective about who to follow. Now I only read and receive tweets from folk who I am genuinely interested in.

Finally, don't get drawn into arguments. The other day, my eye caught on a lengthy argument between two Facebook 'friends'. It started with someone complaining about being taken advantage of. I didn't feel that Facebook was the right place to deal with the problem but, unlike others, I refrained from going online and telling them that!

Social media ought to be a pleasant 'chill out' place and for the majority of us, it is.

Sharon Boothroyd, www.kishboo.co.uk



Don't buy cameras you don't understand

In his column in Issue 374, 'Too much manual labour is bad for you', Barry Collins says that expensive cameras should come with instructions on how to use basic functions such as shutter-speed settings. Surely no one with any sense would buy a £500 camera without having a basic knowledge of photography? That would be like buying a musical instrument and expecting it to come with instructions on how to play it.



Derrick Bateman, via email

What you say...

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE BBC'S PLANS TO FORCE PEOPLE WATCHING CATCH-UP TV ON THE iPLAYER TO PAY THE LICENCE FEE?

Yes. Why should content be free on the iPlayer when you need a licence to watch broadcast TV? I don't think it can remain free, and the alternative would be to have to put up with adverts.

Neil Gove

No. It should only apply to those who have an actual TV set – that is why it is called a TV Licence.

Daniel Harrington

Yes. Why should those paying the Licence Fee subsidise people using the iPlayer?

Richard Bond

It seems unfair. And even if they did start charging, people would probably watch more programmes on less reputable sites.

Matt McCallion

If they put the money towards making decent programmes then I would agree, but they don't – the programmes are rubbish.

Vinny Barnes

SHOULD YOU BE ALLOWED TO TEXT THE 999 EMERGENCY SERVICES?

I used to be a 100/999 operator back in the Seventies. A text would be a nightmare. You can't give or get enough information via text.

Sue Malin

If you have time to text, it isn't an emergency, unless your life is in danger and you're hiding from someone. I think emergency operators have a hard enough job without the added pressure of texts. Plus, David Cameron isn't going to fund the extra staff to cope with it.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

It would be useful for those that are deaf or can't speak. Or people who can't call because doing so would put them at risk.

Wolf Simpson

WHAT'S BETTER – APPLE MUSIC OR SPOTIFY?

I'm an Apple fanboy, though I prefer free streaming. So Spotify (on my Mac) is still my preferred option.

James McGinnis

I have two teenage kids, a wife and myself, all of whom enjoy different music. For me, Apple Music's £14.99-a-month Family Membership is a no-brainer.

Bruce Lauderdale

Spotify is better by a country mile. It has a better bit rate, and there's a free option, too.

Jack @imthegoldmaster

MICROSOFT HAS RELAUNCHED BING MAPS. DO YOU USE IT?

Nope. Google Maps for me, although its design has become irritating.

Ian Phipps

I use it all the time. Google made Maps the worst thing ever - it's truly, truly dire. It was the best at one time, too. That's one of Google's major failings – they create something really good and then feel the need to tinker and mess it up.

Stefan Ketola

Yes because Google Maps is too slow to load. Google's maps are better, than Bing's, but lack of time means I use Bing.

Dave Bowers @Bunkybowers

Page 404



Barry Collins in on the warpath as EE makes billions from angry customers

The huge rewards of shoddy service



You have to work staggeringly hard to generate 3,000 complaints. When Jeremy Clarkson said he would have striking public sector workers "executed in front of their families" on prime-time television, only 736 people were sufficiently enraged to complain to regulator Ofcom. Yet, in the first three months of this year, EE has managed to rack up 2,800 complaints about its service to that very same regulator.

And that's not the half of it. EE only managed to upset 0.1 in every thousand of its 28 million mobile customers, but it's even better at brassing off broadband customers, racking up 0.5 complaints per thousand – at least twice as many as every other major provider.

Now, I know what you're thinking. Give it a rest, Collins. Half a person per thousand folk is nowt to get wound up about. Except that's only the people who complained. Thirty-one thousand went direct to the BBC about that Clarkson outburst. If that's roughly proportional, there are well over 100,000 customers complaining directly to EE. In terms of approval ratings, EE's running a close third to Adolf Hitler and diabetes (I may have made that last statistic up).

> "In terms of approval ratings, EE's running a close third to Adolf Hitler and diabetes"

EE is so bad at handling customer complaints that, earlier this month, Ofcom fined it £1m for failing to deal with them "appropriately and fairly". EE is supposed to inform customers that there's an independent adjudicator on hand if they aren't satisfied with the company's response to complaints, but it seems it couldn't be bothered. Maybe it was too busy profiting from angry customers instead.

Indeed, when last summer EE noticed that all those awkward customers ringing up with problems were clogging its telephone lines, it had the barefaced cheek to impose a system called Priority Answer. This charges anyone ringing its support lines 50p to jump the telephone queue to speak to the next available operator. "Your call is important to us. Just not as important as the call from the person who couldn't bear to listen to Beethoven's Fifth for the next 45 minutes. Please hold."

When *The Telegraph* confronted EE about the matter, the company told the newspaper (with a straight face, apparently) that its "goal was to set the highest standard for customer service" and that, because it had "already committed to returning over 1,000 roles to the UK from overseas call centres", it had to "introduce some small charges for certain customer services". EE's annual profits climbed 10 per cent in 2014 to £1.6bn. That £1m Ofcom fine won't even make a dent.

It angers me that appalling customer service has become a lucrative business. EE is in the middle of a £12.5bn takeover by BT, which will merge one company with a terrible customer-service record with another. BT has held on to the title of most complained-about pay TV provider for a record eight successive quarters, and has above-industry average complaint volumes for fixed-line telephone and broadband, according to Ofcom.

The potential for disaster even moved consumer watchdog *Which?* to write to Ofcom and the Competition and Markets Authority (which has to approve the merger), warning that the BT/EE deal could "adversely affect competition and the level of service that consumers receive in the UK".

Will EE's record of profiting handsomely from poor customer service be enough for the regulators to put the kibosh on the proposed takeover? 50p says it won't.

Illustration: Andrew Torrens

Do you agree? Let us know at webuser@dennis.co.uk

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